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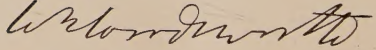

A SELECTION

OF

THE SHORTER POEMS OF

WORDSWORTH

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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INTRODUCTION

I

SKETCH OF WORDSWORTH'S LIFE

The life of Wordsworth presents little in the way of stirring incident or varied experience to attract the ordinary reader: it is rich only in the experiences of his mind. William Wordsworth was the second son of John Wordsworth, attorney-at-law, and was born on April 7, 1770, at Cockermouth, in Cumberland. His mother was Anne, only daughter of William Cookson, of Penrith. His family, though not illustrious, was still of some note in the northern counties. His grandfather, to quote from the autobiographical memoranda dictated by the poet to his nephew and biographer, Christopher Wordsworth, "was descended from a family who had been settled at Peniston in Yorkshire, near the sources of the Don, probably before the Norman Conquest." [1] About the only tangible evidence of the early importance of the family, however, is an almery, which, as an inscription carved on it states, was made in 1525 at the expense of a William Wordsworth.

The poet's infancy and early boyhood were passed partly at Cockermouth, and partly at Penrith with his mother's parents. At the age of eight he lost his mother. She was not in any way a remarkable woman; but the poet has testified to her good sense in looking after the early education of her children. She made no attempt to make prodigies out of them, but wisely

[1] *Memoirs of William Wordsworth*, I, 7 (London, 1851).

allowed them their full measure of innocent amusements. She probably knew nothing about Rousseau and his new theory of education according to nature; but she agreed with him in thinking that "nature meant that children should be children before they were men." As for her husband, his healthy interest in his children's intellectual welfare may be gathered from the fact that he made them learn by heart large portions of the best English poets, particularly Shakespeare, Milton, and Spenser.

Shortly after the death of the mother, the Wordsworth home was broken up, and William and his elder brother Richard proceeded to school. Hawkshead, the school to which they were sent, was admirably fitted for the training of the future poet. Not to speak of the great native beauty of its situation, the discipline there maintained harmonized well with that which had obtained in the poet's own home, — a discipline which suited his temperament to perfection. Hard study was not thought of, and plenty of liberty was allowed. The boys were lodged in the village and in the neighboring hamlets at the houses of "dames," and after school hours were free to go where they pleased and make what acquaintances they would. Life at Hawkshead, accordingly, was a happy one for them all. "Of my earliest days at school," remarked the poet in his later years, "I have little to say, but that they were very happy ones, chiefly because I was left at liberty, then and in the vacations, to read whatever books I liked. For example, I read all Fielding's works, *Don Quixote*, *Gil Blas*, and any part of Swift that I liked; *Gulliver's Travels*, and the *Tale of a Tub* being both much to my taste." [1]

Before William completed his course at Hawkshead, his father died, and he was left an orphan and to the care of guardians. The family fortune was not very large, — it consisted chiefly in a claim of £5000 upon the Earl of Lonsdale, which, however, that worthy nobleman arbitrarily refused to pay, — but enough money was forthcoming to keep the poet and his brothers at school and to send them to college if they wished to go. In 1787, accordingly, Wordsworth left Hawkshead and

[1] *Memoirs*, I, 10.

went up to Cambridge. The change was not in all respects an agreeable one for the young student. He missed the hills of the Lake country and the freedom he had enjoyed there. College life, after the first novelty of it wore off, proved rather distasteful to him. The course of studies pursued at the university then seemed to him narrow, and those in authority little worthy of reverence. He especially disliked the spirit of emulation which was inculcated there. No such emulation had been known at Hawkshead; and he neither could, nor would, adapt himself to it. Education, in his view, was not a race but a quiet, steady growth, wherein the mind should be left to unfold itself naturally and without artificial stimulation. Hence, of the time he spent at college, the pleasantest and possibly, also, the most profitable part was that of the long vacations, when he was free to do what he would. The first vacation was devoted to revisiting the old familiar scenes of his boyhood; the second, to a ramble through Derbyshire and Yorkshire with his sister Dorothy and her friend, Mary Hutchinson, — the lady who was afterward to become his wife; and the last, when he should have been at his books preparing for his degree, to a tour through France, Switzerland, and northern Italy. The Alps, which were then little visited by tourists, made a great impression upon him, as is evidenced by the fact that he has left us two separate descriptions of his visit to them, — one in the *Descriptive Sketches* and the other in *The Prelude*.

After taking his degree at Cambridge, which he did early in 1791, he bade farewell to "the sheltered seats" of learning. He had gained no distinction at college, and an academic life was therefore out of the question. Moreover, such a life was distasteful to him; he preferred to study men and things rather than books. Nowhere, of course, could he study men better than in that great heart of human society, London; and, accordingly, he went thither shortly after leaving college. The mighty city had been a sort of fairy-land to his youthful imagination; and, though an earlier visit had robbed it of its romance, it still had a great fascination for him. Here, more than elsewhere, he could see the unity of man "affectingly set forth."

In the autumn of 1791 he paid a second visit to France.

His object seems to have been to acquire a knowledge of French sufficient to fit him for the position of a travelling tutor, for the question of an occupation was beginning to be a pressing one. His destination was Orleans; and in proceeding thither he stopped for a short time in Paris, looked on at the controversies of the "hissing Factionists," and picked up a relic or so of the Bastille. The Revolution had not as yet, however, touched him very nearly. At Orleans he made the acquaintance of the republican, Beaupuy, who showed him what the revolutionists were fighting for, and inspired him with a zeal for their cause. Returning to Paris, he attended the meetings of the National Assembly, and had even thoughts of taking an active part in the war of factions raging there, in the hope of averting some of the massacres which were being perpetrated in the name of justice and liberty. It was perhaps fortunate for him, however, that he was compelled to return home at this crisis, else he might have made one of the innumerable victims of that reign of horror. From this time on, his ardor for the cause of the revolutionists cooled perceptibly. He could still feel keen mortification at the fact of the English going to war against the French; but at the same time he could not help being greatly disturbed at the course events were taking in France. The struggle for liberty seemed to be degenerating into a struggle for license. He had hoped much from the Revolution, and now that his hopes were doomed to disappointment, he found himself obliged to reconsider his whole political faith.[1] The

[1] Wordsworth is sometimes charged with having given up the principles for which he stood in his earlier years and become an apostate from the cause of liberty. He certainly modified his views, but he can scarcely be said to have given up the cause of liberty. In a letter written in 1821, he says: "I should think I had lived to little purpose if my notions on the subject of government had undergone no modification: my youth must, in that case, have been without enthusiasm, and my manhood endued with small capability of profiting by reflection. . . . I abandoned France and her rulers when they abandoned the struggle for liberty, gave themselves up to tyranny, and endeavoured to enslave the world. . . . A free discussion of public measures through the press I deem the *only* safeguard to liberty: without it I have neither confidence in kings, parliaments, judges, or divines: they have all in their turn betrayed their country. But the press, so potent for good,

effort cost him a good deal of mental distress; but, thanks to the companionship of his sister Dorothy and a return to solitary communings with nature, in the end he reached settled convictions and calmness of mind.

The important question that faced him on his return to England was the question of a vocation in life. He had as yet no profession, and had made little or no preparation for one. Nothing had come of his attempts to secure a position as a tutor. His friends wanted him either to study law or to enter the church; but the law was distasteful to him, and the unsettled state of his faith made it impossible for him to think of taking holy orders. Journalism seemed to be his only resource; accordingly, he proposed to a friend that they should start a new periodical, to be called the *Philanthropist*, — Wordsworth volunteering to contribute "critical remarks on poetry, the arts of painting, gardening, etc., besides essays on morals and politics."[1] The scheme went no further than a proposal, however. Possibly the consciousness that he was destined for better things kept him from committing himself to anything definite. One of the first things he had done on returning from France was to publish two poems which he had written, the one during his college vacations, the other during his residence in France. Poetry like the *Evening Walk* and the *Descriptive Sketches*, however, was not likely to help him much on the road to fame, as he, indeed, knew very well. "It was with great reluctance," he writes to a friend in May, 1794, "that I sent those two little books into the world in so imperfect a state. But, as I had done nothing by which to distinguish myself at the university. I thought these little things might show that I *could* do something."[2] He knew that he was possessed of unusual powers, and he doubtless thought that he would in some way find a fair opportunity to exert them. The opportunity was not long in coming. A bequest from a devoted friend and admirer, reliev-

is scarcely less so for evil. . . . I am *therefore* for vigorous restrictions; but there is scarcely any abuse that I would not endure rather than sacrifice, or even endanger, this freedom." *Memoirs*, II, 23–24. For a complete discussion of this point, see W. Hale White's *Examination of the Charge of Apostasy against Wordsworth*, London, 1898.

[1] *Memoirs*, I, 83. [2] *Memoirs*, I, 83.

ing him from all danger of necessity, he determined to follow his true bent and devote himself to poetry.

Accordingly, in the autumn of 1795 he took a house at Racedown, in Dorsetshire, and with his sister Dorothy, whose society he was always fond of and was now able to enjoy permanently, settled down to a life of quiet reading or writing, as the mood swayed him. It was a very retired place "with little or no society, and a post only once a week"; but there was delightful scenery in the neighborhood, and this was enough to make it attractive to the Wordsworths. *Guilt and Sorrow* and *The Borderers* are the chief fruits of the poet's residence here. Both these poems are a great improvement on his earlier pieces, though they give little hint of his style at its best. His mature style came to him somewhat suddenly — so suddenly, in fact, that one cannot help thinking that his intimacy with Coleridge, which happened about the same time, had something to do with it. Just how, or when, the two poets came to know each other is uncertain. Coleridge had married in October, 1795, and had settled down at Clevedon, near Bristol, whence he removed after a short time to Nether Stowey. The two poets seem to have met either in the summer of 1795 or in the spring of 1796.[1] At any rate, by June, 1797, they were fast friends and admirers of each other's work. Writing to his friend Cottle, the publisher, in that month, Coleridge says: "I am sojourning for a few days at Racedown, Dorset, the mansion of our friend Wordsworth. . . . Wordsworth admires my tragedy, which gives me great hopes. Wordsworth has written a tragedy himself. I speak with heartfelt sincerity, and, I think unblinded judgment, when I tell you that I feel myself a little man by his side."[2]

In July, 1797, the Wordsworths removed from Racedown to Alfoxden, in Somersetshire. Their principal inducement in making the change was to be nearer Coleridge; but the beauty of the place also attracted them. Here, among the Quantock hills and under the spell of their cheerful beauty, many of

[1] Mr. E. H. Coleridge says (*Coleridge's Letters*, p. 163, note): "The probable conclusion is that there was a first meeting in 1795, and occasional intercourse in 1796, but that intimacy and friendship date from the visit to Racedown in June, 1797."

[2] *Coleridge's Letters*, pp. 220–221.

Wordsworth's best poems were written, — for example, *Tintern Abbey*, *A Night-Piece*, *Expostulation and Reply*, *The Tables Turned*, and *Lines Written in Early Spring*. It was the springtime of his creative activity, and it was a spring rich with promise.

Besides Coleridge, there were other congenial friends in the neighborhood of Alfoxden who helped to enliven the time for the Wordsworths. Among these, the most notable were Southey, Cottle, Charles Lloyd, Thomas Poole, and John Thelwall. Lamb and Hazlitt were also among their visitors. Hazlitt's account of his first meeting with Wordsworth is particularly interesting, and is worth quoting: "In the afternoon, Coleridge took me over to Alfoxden. . . . Wordsworth himself was from home, but his sister kept house, and set before us a frugal repast; and we had free access to her brother's poems, the Lyrical Ballads which were still in manuscript. I dipt into a few of these with great satisfaction, and with the faith of a novice. I slept that night in an old room with blue hangings, and covered with round-faced family portraits of the ages of Georges I and II. . . . Coleridge and myself walked back to Stowey that evening. . . . The next day Wordsworth arrived from Bristol at Coleridge's cottage. I think I see him now. He answered in some degree to his friend's description of him, but was more gaunt and Don Quixote-like. He was quaintly dressed . . . in a brown fustian jacket, and striped pantaloons. There was something of a roll, a lounge in his gait, not unlike his own Peter Bell. There was a severe, worn pressure of thought about his temples, a fire in his eye (as if he saw something in objects more than the outward appearance) an intense high narrow forehead, a Roman nose, cheeks furrowed by strong purpose and feeling, and a convulsive inclination to laughter about the mouth, a good deal at variance with the solemn, stately expression of the rest of his face."[1]

In the early part of the winter of 1797, the Wordsworths were in London for a few weeks, their business being to see if *The Borderers* might be put upon the stage. It could not be

[1] *The Liberal*, II, 37–40 (1823).

managed, however, although one of the principal actors at Covent Garden had "expressed great approbation" of the play. *The Borderers* was not fitted for representation on the stage, for Wordsworth's genius was not at all of the dramatic order. The poet himself recognized this fact, and made no more attempts in the line of the drama.

The next year was a notable one in Wordsworth's life, — a notable one, we may also say, in the history of English poetry, for it witnessed the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*. The little volume contained poems by Coleridge, as well as by Wordsworth, but by far the greater number were Wordsworth's. The story of the origin of this epoch-making book has often been told, but Wordsworth's own account will bear repeating: "In the spring of the year 1798, he (Coleridge), my sister, and myself, started from Alfoxden, pretty late in the afternoon, with a view to visit Linton and the valley of Stones near it; and as our funds were very small, we agreed to defray the expense of the tour by writing a poem, to be sent to the New Monthly Magazine. . . . Accordingly we set off and proceeded along the Quantock Hills towards Watchet, and in the course of this walk was planned the poem of the *Ancient Mariner*. . . . Much the greatest part of the story was Mr. Coleridge's invention; but certain parts I myself suggested. . . . The *Ancient Mariner* grew and grew till it became too important for our first object, which was limited to our expectation of five pounds, and we began to talk of a Volume, which was to consist, as Mr. Coleridge has told the world, of poems chiefly on supernatural subjects taken from common life, but looked at, as much as might be, through an imaginative medium."[1] Coleridge's account is substantially the same: "During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbours, our conversation turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination. . . . The

[1] Fenwick note to *We are Seven*. The Fenwick notes were dictated by Wordsworth to Miss Isabella Fenwick in 1843, and first published in connection with the poems to which they refer in 1857.

thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural. . . . For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life."[1] Coleridge was to write those poems in which the incidents and agents were to be supernatural, and Wordsworth, on the other hand, those in which the things of everyday life were to be given "the interest of novelty."

The publication of the volume was avowedly an experiment, undertaken chiefly with the idea of instituting a reform in English poetry. But the experiment did not succeed very well, the taste of the public being still fast wedded to the artificial style of the eighteenth-century poets. "The Lyrical Ballads," writes Mrs. Coleridge shortly after their appearance, "are laughed at and disliked by all with very few exceptions."[2] A few choice spirits here and there, indeed, were appreciative; but the reviewers, as a rule, were so severe and the sale of the book so slow that, according to Cottle, its publisher, "its progress to oblivion seemed ordained to be as rapid as it was certain."[3] The ridicule of the critics was not wholly unjustifiable, for there was undoubtedly much to be condemned in the little volume, — some of the poems being almost intolerably prosy, and others in rather questionable taste. But the good far outweighed the bad, and the *Lyrical Ballads* did not sink into oblivion after all. The adverse criticisms to which the book was subjected had one bad effect, however; they created a prejudice against Wordsworth which seriously hampered him in his later work.

Almost immediately after the appearance of the *Lyrical Ballads*, the Wordsworths, in company with Coleridge, started for a visit to Germany. They went first to Hamburg, staying there a few days for the sake of meeting the poet Klopstock, whom Dorothy describes in her journal as "a venerable old man, retaining the liveliness and alertness of youth"; thence,

[1] *Biographia Literaria*, Chapter XIV (1848).
[2] Mrs. Sanford's *Thomas Poole and his Friends*, I, 308.
[3] *Early Recollections*, II, 23 (1837).

parting company with Coleridge, they went on to Goslar. Their object was to get a good acquaintance with the German language, and also, if possible, to see a little of German society. But they were not fortunate in their choice of a residence, and made few friends. On the whole, their stay in Goslar was not very pleasant. It was by no means time wasted, however, for Wordsworth managed to read some German and also to write a little poetry. *Lucy Gray*, *The Fountain*, and *Matthew* are among the poems written at this time.

Returning to England in 1799, the Wordsworths, after a few months' stay at Sockburn-on-Tees with the Hutchinsons, settled down at Grasmere in that little cottage which has since become so famous. Dove Cottage[1] has often been described, but the most interesting description of it will always be that which Dorothy Wordsworth has given us, in which she tells how she and her brother planted roses, honeysuckles, and scarlet beans around it to beautify the outside, and how she contrived to make the inside comfortable by laying down matting on the stone floors and by papering some of the small rooms with newspapers. Of all the poet's homes, this was the one most congenial to him; and as the greater part of his best work was produced here, it will always remain inseparably associated with his name.

Delightful as the Wordsworths found it at Grasmere, however, their life here was still a very quiet one. They had only about £100 a year between them, and the poet had little prospect of increasing this sum by the labor of his pen. His poetry was not popular, nor was it likely soon to become so. He had to wait for his audience. To a certain extent, indeed, he had to create it. The Wordsworths therefore found "plain living" as much to be commended as "high thinking." They lived very simply, almost as simply, in fact, as the dalesmen around them. The poet's chief pleasure was in walking, and he often took long rambles through the surrounding country. In these rambles he did much of his composing; his study was the fields, the woods, the mountains — any place, indeed, where he could catch inspiration direct from nature.

[1] It is now national property and is used as a Wordsworth museum.

With him, or near him, would almost always be his devoted sister. Nothing in all literary history is more touching than the devotion of this sister to her brother, — a devotion so self-effacing on the one side, and so completely accepted on the other, that it was probably somewhat of an injury to both. To the poet, Dorothy was more than sister, friend, and companion: she was almost another self.

> "She gave me eyes, she gave me ears;
> And humble cares, and delicate fears;
> A heart, the fountain of sweet tears;
> And love, and thought, and joy,"[1]

says he of her in grateful acknowledgment of her ministrations to him. From her journals, we learn how she walked and talked with him; how she read to him, copied, and even corrected his poems for him occasionally; and how she did a thousand other little acts of service for him. These journals, indeed, are invaluable as records of the daily life of the poet's household, not to speak of their own literary merit. A brief extract from the Grasmere journal will illustrate their value: —

"Sunday Morning. — William . . . got up at nine o'clock, but before he rose he had finished *The Beggar Boy*, and while we were at breakfast . . . he wrote the poem *To a Butterfly!* . . . The thought first came upon him as we were talking about the pleasure we both always felt at the sight of a butterfly. I told him that I used to chase them a little, but that I was afraid of brushing the dust off their wings, and did not catch them. . . . I wrote it down and the other poems, and I read them all over to him. . . .

"Wednesday. . . . A sweet evening as it had been a sweet day, and I walked quietly along the side of Rydal lake with thoughts — the hills and the lake were still — the owls had not begun to hoot, and the little birds had given over singing. I looked before me and saw a red light upon Silver How as if coming out of the vale below. . . . Thus I was going on when I saw the shape of my Beloved in the road at a little distance. We turned back to see the light but it was fading — almost gone. . . . When we came in sight of our own dear Grasmere,

[1] See *The Sparrow's Nest.*

the vale looked fair and quiet in the moonshine, the church was there and all the cottages. There were huge slow-travelling clouds in the sky, that threw large masses of shade upon some of the mountains. We walked backwards and forwards . . . till I was tired."[1]

During the first year of the poet's residence at Grasmere, a second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* was issued, and at the same time another volume added containing some thirty new pieces, among the most notable of which were *Michael* and *The Brothers*. In a remarkable preface, he explained the principles of his poetic art, which had been only hinted at in the preface to the first edition, and defended himself against the charges that had been made against him. But as far as gaining the ear of the public was concerned, he was still about as badly off as before. It was therefore something of a relief to him when, in 1802, the old debt which Lord Lonsdale had owed his father was at last paid. The share which fell to the lot of the poet and his sister was some £2400, — not a very large sum, indeed, but it nevertheless made an appreciable difference in their income. On the strength of this addition to his fortune, the poet was enabled to marry. He had known and admired his sister's friend, Mary Hutchinson, from childhood, and his boyish affection having ripened into love, he had the satisfaction of completing his happiness by a union with her. The marriage was celebrated in October, 1802, at Brompton, in Yorkshire. There was not much romance about the courtship and marriage; romance, indeed, was a thing which made very little appeal to Wordsworth. His sister, it seems, wrote many of his letters to Miss Hutchinson for him; and she accompanied the newly wedded pair on their wedding journey. Wordsworth's wife was not a woman of any great intellectual ability; but she had gentle and gracious manners, and proved herself to be a helpful and sympathetic mate for him. She was

> "A creature not too bright or good
> For human nature's daily food;
> For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
> Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.
> * * * * *

[1] Knight's *Dorothy Wordsworth's Journal*, I, 99–102.

> "A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
> To warn, to comfort, and command;
> And yet a Spirit still, and bright
> With something of angelic light."[1]

In June, 1803, the poet's eldest son, John, was born. His other children were Dorothy, born in 1804; Thomas, born in 1806; Catherine, born in 1808; and William, born in 1810.

Shortly after the birth of his eldest son, Wordsworth made a tour through Scotland, gathering there the materials for some of his finest pieces, — such, for example, as *The Solitary Reaper* and *Yarrow Unvisited*, — and making also the acquaintance of Scott, about whom he had already heard much from a common friend. He found Scott very attractive personally, although he never could see much to admire in his poetry. Scott had centred his interest too much on the pomp and glitter of life, and too little on those things which appeal only to the "inward eye" to please Wordsworth. Nevertheless, Wordsworth valued Scott's friendship very highly.

The years 1804 and 1805 seem to have been devoted mainly to work on *The Prelude*, which he had planned and begun in Goslar, but had neglected ever since. When finished, it seemed to him of a prodigious length; but he felt himself unable to say what he had to say in less space, the faculty for condensing not being one of his strong points. He put it by, however, for future revision, not intending to publish it in his lifetime. In the meantime, he made another appeal to the public in the shape of two small volumes of poems, published in 1807. The result, however, was in no wise different from that of his earlier publications, as indeed he himself foresaw would be the case. "It is impossible," he writes in a letter to Lady Beaumont, dated May 21, 1807, "that any expectations can be lower than mine concerning the immediate effect of this little work upon what is called the public. I do not here take into consideration the envy and malevolence, and all the bad passions which always stand in the way of a work of any merit from a living poet; but merely think of the pure, absolute, honest ignorance in which

[1] See "She was a phantom of delight."

all worldlings of every rank and situation must be enveloped, with respect to the thoughts, feelings, and images, on which the life of my poems depends. The things which I have taken, whether from within or without, what have they to do with routs, dinners, morning calls . . . ? — what have they to do with endless talking about things nobody cares anything for except as their own vanity is concerned, . . . ? — what have they to do (to say all at once) with a life without love ? " [1]

By the year 1808, the Wordsworth family had grown too large for Dove Cottage, and the poet was forced to move. He had spent the winter of 1806–1807 at Coleorton in a farmhouse which Sir George Beaumont had considerately placed at his disposal, but this was only a temporary arrangement. The new home finally selected was Allan Bank, near the head of the lake and within sight of Dove Cottage. It turned out to be a rather uncomfortable house, however, and the poet found himself forced to move again; and, after a two years' residence at the Parsonage, which was saddened by the loss of two children, he removed in 1813, to Rydal Mount, near Ambleside, where he resided for the remainder of his life. The situation of the new home was all that could be desired. "Backed and flanked by lofty fells, which bring the heavenly bodies to touch, as it were, the earth upon the mountain tops," it afforded a splendid view of the valley lying between Windermere, on the one side, and Grasmere, on the other, — a view so fine that it almost reconciled the poet to his enforced removal from his "beloved Grasmere." A slight token of public favor in the way of an office under the government, which was given him at this time, helped also to reconcile him to the change.

The most notable event in the early years of his residence at Rydal Mount was the publication of *The Excursion*, which appeared in 1814. The great work, however, fell as flat as all his other works had done. The reviews, with a few exceptions, were still severe, not to say contemptuous, in their treatment of him, — the *Edinburgh Review*, with its famous "this will never do," being the most pronounced in its hostility. Nevertheless, Wordsworth's circle of admirers was beginning to show some

[1] *Memoirs*, I, 331–332.

signs of increasing. Many of his friends were coming to have a power and influence of their own in the literary world, and their advocacy of his cause was at last producing some effect. Not to mention Coleridge, Southey, and Lamb, who were all in a sense identified with him in his reforming crusade, such men as Wilson (Christopher North) and Henry Crabb Robinson were among those who were ready to recognize his greatness in spite of his unpopularity.

Wordsworth's most important publications in the next few years were a collected edition of his shorter poems in 1815, *The White Doe of Rylstone* in the same year, and *Peter Bell* in 1819. Neither of the new poems added anything to his fame: those who expected a romantic subject to be treated much as Scott had treated such subjects, were disappointed in *The White Doe;* and those who had always ridiculed Wordsworth's prosiness found a fresh object for their ridicule in *Peter Bell.*

Frequent tours occupied much of Wordsworth's life during these years. Wandering, indeed, was a sort of passion with him; and he has told us that if he had been born in a humbler rank in life, he would probably have become a pedler, like his hero in *The Excursion.* A journey to Scotland in 1831, not to mention other tours, is interesting because of his last meeting with Scott. Scott was fast sinking into his last resting-place, but he still had sufficient mental energy to enjoy a talk with his brother poet. Wordsworth's account of his last day at Abbotsford is touching in the extreme: "On Tuesday morning," says he, "Sir Walter Scott accompanied us . . . to Newark Castle, on the Yarrow. . . . On our return in the afternoon we had to cross the Tweed, directly opposite Abbotsford. . . . A rich but sad light of rather a purple than a golden hue, was spread over the Eildon Hills at that moment; and, thinking it probable that it might be the last time Sir Walter would cross the stream, I was not a little moved, and expressed some of my feelings in the sonnet beginning,

'A trouble, not of clouds, or weeping rain.'

At noon on Thursday we left Abbotsford, and on the morning of that day Sir Walter and I had a serious conversation, *tête-à*

tête, when he spoke with gratitude of the happy life which, upon the whole, he had led."[1]

The last period of Wordsworth's life — that is, the period from about 1820 on — offers little in the way of production that calls for notice. His imagination seems to have deserted him almost entirely during these years. In one or two sonnets, indeed, his early vigor still manifests itself; but in most of his later work the loss of power is painfully visible. It is a pity that he did not see fit to rest upon his oars after his work was done. He could well have afforded to do so; for that work had, on the whole, been nobly done, and was bound in the end to secure due recognition. What strikes us with amazement now is that this recognition was so long withheld. Even so late as 1825, there was not, so Coleridge assures us,[2] a single copy of his works, or any part of them, to be procured in all Edinburgh. This, doubtless, is scarcely a fair sample of his standing with the reading public in general, owing to the especially strong influence of the *Edinburgh Review* in that city; but there is no question about the fact that until the last twenty years of his life his poetry was little read. He himself complained to Rogers in 1825 that he could not get anything out of his poems over and above the first cost of publishing them.[3] The next ten years, however, brought about a decided change. The critics gradually dropped their carping and fault-finding tone, and the reading public found out at last that there was something in his poetry after all. Honors of all kinds were then showered upon him. The universities of Durham and Oxford each conferred on him the honorary degree of D.C.L., — the former in 1838, the latter in 1839; in 1842, on his resignation of his position in the stamp office, he was granted a pension of £300 a year in recognition of his distinguished literary work; and in the following year, on the death of Southey, he was made Poet Laureate. He was for declining this office at first from the fear, as he tells us, of incurring responsibilities which he might not prove equal to at his advanced age; but on being assured that the feeling of all

[1] Fenwick note to *Yarrow Revisited, and Other Poems.*
[2] See *Coleridge's Letters*, p. 742.
[3] See Clayden's *Thomas Rogers and his Contemporaries*, I, 402.

parties favored the appointment, and above all that nothing would be required of him in the way of writing to order, his scruples gave way, and he accepted the position.

His success was now complete. It had been a long struggle against neglect and abuse, but he had won at last. As for himself, he had never for a moment wavered in his course, nor even doubted what the issue would be. He had had from the very first an assured confidence in his own powers, and had felt that the victory must ultimately be his. He bore his triumph, however, as he had borne his neglect, quietly and unostentatiously. It came too late to give him other than a melancholy sort of satisfaction.

His last years were not, on the whole, very happy ones. Domestic affliction disturbed his repose. The unhappy condition of his sister, who had fallen into a state of feebleness, bodily and mental, beyond hope of recovery, distressed him greatly; but his sorest trial was the loss of his beloved daughter, Dora, who died in 1847. She had been his especial favorite among his children, — so dear to him that he had found it hard to give her to a husband; and when she died, he could not resign himself to her loss. He was never himself again after this. But the end was not far off. In April, 1850, he was laid to rest by her side in the little Grasmere churchyard by the Rotha.

As for his character, no words can indicate it better than those fine words of Tennyson which speak of him as one "that uttered nothing base." With Milton, he held that a poet who would write a noble poem should live a noble life. His life, at any rate, was noble; and the nobility of it is reflected in his poetry. All who knew him well testify as to the sincerity of his words. "He wrote as he lived," says his nephew and biographer, "and he lived as he wrote."[1]

[1] *Memoirs*, I, 3.

II

THE INFLUENCE OF HIS PRECURSORS

When Wordsworth's earliest pieces, the *Evening Walk* and the *Descriptive Sketches*, first appeared, the dominant influence in English poetry was still that exercised by the school of Pope. The young writer of that day who essayed to prove himself a poetic genius usually did so through the medium of heroic couplets, the fabrication of which, thanks to Pope, had become "a mere mechanic art." But though the influence of the school was still strong, it had begun to show perceptible signs of weakening. The masters had all gone, and there were none to take their places. Of the leading poets of the day, only a few could be reckoned as of the orthodox faith. Cowper had abjured its tenets, and Burns had never accepted them. It was left to Crabbe almost alone to carry on the traditions of the school. But the distance between Crabbe and Pope is immense: it is the distance, in fact, between the age of liberalism and the age of authority.

The age of Pope regarded conformity to established custom as one of the chiefest of virtues. As Professor Beers says, "It desired to put itself under discipline, to follow rules, to discover a formula of correctness in all arts, to set up a tribunal of taste and establish canons of composition, to maintain standards, copy models and patterns, comply with conventions, and chastise lawlessness."[1] The Augustans, in their rebound from the lawlessness of the "metaphysical" school of poets, were unwilling to tolerate anything savoring of irregularity; hence their dislike for the exhibition of passion in poetry, for passion is apt to lead one beyond bounds. The poet, therefore, had to keep his emotion under very strict control; he could not venture to give free rein to his feelings or to his imagination without

[1] H. A. Beers, *History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 47.

running the risk of seriously displeasing the audience. Joseph Warton, for instance, in publishing in 1746 a volume of odes somewhat romantic in tone, felt constrained to apologize for them in this fashion: "The public has been so much accustomed of late to didactic poetry alone, and essays on moral subjects, that any work where the imagination is much indulged, will perhaps not be relished or regarded. The author therefore of these pieces is in some pain, lest certain austere critics should think them too fanciful or too descriptive. But as he is convinced that the fashion of moralising in verse has been carried too far, and as he looks upon invention and imagination to be the chief faculties of a poet, so he will be happy if the following odes may be looked upon as an attempt to bring poetry back into its right channel."[1] But Warton's modest appeal for the restoration to the poet of his ancient privilege of using his imagination, met with little or no immediate encouragement. The public was not yet in a mood for anything that would appeal very strongly to the imaginative faculty, or that would stir the emotions deeply. What they relished most was fancy, wit, brilliancy, and point. This was what Pope had given them, and this was what they had become accustomed to look upon as constituting the chief excellence of poetry. Pope's success in enlivening the commonplace with wit and satire was so complete, and his authority with his own generation and that succeeding so great, that people were for a time blind to the fact that he had his limitations. These limitations became apparent, of course, when it was discovered that every petty musician could play upon his instrument with greater or less facility. It took a little time, indeed, to make this discovery; but once made, Pope's degradation from the lofty seat among the English poets assigned to him by his contemporaries became inevitable. In the meantime, however, the Augustan traditions which had centred themselves in him were handed on through the medium of his immediate successors, Johnson and Goldsmith. Johnson's influence was exerted, of course, along the lines of criticism rather than of poetry; but it was a potent

[1] Joseph Warton, *Advertisement* to *Odes on Various Subjects*, London, 1746.

influence, and probably did much to retard the growing movement toward liberalism. Goldsmith, on the other hand, is an Augustan in name more than in fact. His heroic couplets are quite different from Pope's: freedom, ease, and warmth of feeling, characterize them, rather than brilliancy, point, and cold intellectuality. Warm-hearted and sympathetic by nature, Goldsmith cannot entirely repress his emotions, as the Augustans are wont to do. His feelings will betray themselves in spite of him; and notwithstanding the fashionable mask of conventionality which he wears, the honest sincerity that is in him is easily discernible. We can see in him a prophecy of the future, although his predilections seem to be for the past. He marks, as it were, a sort of turning-point between the age of authority and the age of liberalism. We can trace in him the first faint beginnings of that democratic spirit which becomes so marked a feature of English poetry toward the end of the eighteenth century, and which reaches its highest point in Wordsworth. Man, to him, is more than a mere unit in society. Still, such is the force of the narrow theory of art which he inherits that he never attempts to describe things as he actually sees them. He throws a glamour of sentimentality over his picture. His rustics are all "nymphs" and "swains," and his villages, "lovely bowers of innocence and ease." Realism is not his province: that is reserved for those who come after him.

In Crabbe, the last of the school of Pope, the traditional conventionality of the school to a large extent disappears. He is much more faithful to nature than any of his predecessors. He writes with his eye on his subject, and is determined to picture it just as he sees it.

> "I paint the cot,
> As Truth will paint it and as bards will not," [1]

he exclaims in disgust at the sham representations of the pastoral poets. He is "too much in earnest to be otherwise than perfectly truthful." [2] The newly awakened humanitarian spirit glows in him with much the same fervor as in Cowper, Burns, and Wordsworth; and his hatred of wrong and injustice, and

[1] *The Village*, ll. 54–55. [2] J. E. Kebbel, *Life of Crabbe*, p. 115.

the flattering misrepresentation that would conceal and condone them, is no less sincere than theirs. There is nothing of the revolutionist in him, however; he has too much kinship with the Augustans for that.

Crabbe occupies, thus, a sort of middle ground between authority and liberalism. He was too keen-sighted not to see that the old order of things would have to be modified or give way, but he was loath to break with the past, and therefore tried to rejuvenate the old forms by instilling new life into them. And to a certain extent he was successful, at least for the moment. If he did not wholly succeed, as Mr. Kebbel contends, "in combining the characteristics of the Twickenham school and the Lake school, and in showing that the art of the one and the naturalness of the other were capable of being united,"[1] he came very near it. At any rate, he showed that a vivid and moving picture of life as it actually appeared to the observer might be given without departing entirely from the canons of Augustan art. Wordsworth could have learned, and no doubt really did learn much from him, especially in the matter of choosing "incidents and situations from common life" for poetical treatment, though, on the whole, he felt himself bound to characterize Crabbe's mode of considering human nature and society as unpoetical, matter-of-fact, and lacking in beauty and refinement.[2] The reasons for this adverse criticism on Wordsworth's part are obvious enough. The two poets, though interested very largely in the same things, approached them from quite different points of view. Wordsworth saw in concrete objects more than meets the mere bodily eye; Crabbe, on the other hand, adhering to the eighteenth-century point of view, took them simply for what they seemed to be. The imaginative insight which sees a mystery in everything, a hidden meaning underlying phenomena, is lacking in him, as it is in the Augustans generally. The classic poets of the age of Queen Anne were chary of leaving the beaten path of common sense and trusting themselves to the guidance of the imagination. For

[1] *Life of Crabbe*, p. 107.

[2] See H. C. Robinson's *Diary*, I, 253; also Clayden's *Rogers and his Contemporaries*, I, 49–50.

imaginative poetry in the eighteenth century, we must go to the followers of Spenser and Milton.

The influence of Spenser and Milton in helping to dethrone the conventionalism of the school of Pope and in bringing about the reactionary movement which culminated in Wordsworth is not easily overestimated. It would be hard to say which of the two was the more potent force in this regeneration of poetry; but the first place is usually assigned to Spenser, partly, perhaps, because his influence is more readily traceable than that of Milton. He, at any rate, is the great patron of the romanticists; and no wonder. "If there is any poet who is, *par excellence*, the poet of romance, whose art is the antithesis of Pope's, it is the poet of the *Faerie Queene*," as Professor Beers remarks.[1] Spenser, like the true poet, is "of imagination all compact." To turn from Pope to him is like turning from the commonplace, the matter-of-fact, to the wonderful, the enchanting; and it was a healthy sign that even in the height of the reign of classicism Spenser could still find admirers and imitators.

By all odds the greatest of the Spenserian imitators is James Thomson, whose *Castle of Indolence* is less delightful only than the model after which it was fashioned. It would be hard, indeed, to find a poem more captivating in its way than the *Castle of Indolence*. It is not, and never has been, perhaps, so popular as *The Seasons*, where Thomson looks to Milton rather than to Spenser for his inspiration; but it has always been a favorite with the poetically inclined. Wordsworth, as we know, preferred it to *The Seasons* — strange as the preference at first sight may seem. But he found in it greater purity of diction than in *The Seasons;* and purity of diction was a quality upon which he was always inclined to lay special emphasis. *The Seasons* has, it must be acknowledged, fully its share of the tinsel with which the Augustans thought to beautify their poetry. Even its blank verse, good though this often is, smacks strongly of the heroic couplet: its lines have frequently the balance and climacteric effect characteristic of Pope's verse.[2]

[1] *History of English Romanticism*, p. 77.

[2] See Saintsbury, Ward's *English Poets*, III, 171; and also Beers, *English Romanticism*, p. 111.

The spirit of *The Seasons*, however, is quite unlike that of Pope's poetry; and this, after all, is the important point. There is in Thomson a sincere love of nature, a delight in the fresh atmosphere and in the free, untrammelled life of the country which we never find in Pope. This it was, chiefly, which endeared him to Wordsworth, who would otherwise have been much more severe upon his "poetic diction" than he actually is. Thomson has "the vision and the faculty divine"; and in spite of the conventionality of his utterance he exercised a very great influence over Wordsworth. We can discover in him suggestions of not a few of Wordsworth's favorite themes, as, for instance, in the following passages, where he speaks of the "passion of the groves," and of the "inward bliss" which the contemplation of the beauty and serenity of nature induces in the mind: —

> "Hark, how loud the woods
> Invite you forth in all your gayest trim.
> Lend me your song, ye nightingales! oh pour
> The mazy-running soul of melody
> Into my varied verse! while I deduce,
> From the first note the hollow cuckoo sings,
> The symphony of Spring, and touch a theme
> Unknown to fame — the passion of the groves." —[1]

> "Contentment walks
> The sunny glade, and feels an inward bliss
> Spring o'er his mind, beyond the power of kings
> To purchase. Pure serenity apace
> Induces thought, and contemplation still.
> By swift degrees the love of nature works,
> And warms the bosom; till at last, sublimed
> To rapture and enthusiastic heat,
> We feel the present Deity, and taste
> The joy of God to see a happy world!"[2]

We have not Thomson here at his best, of course; but we have an indication of what there was in him to attract Wordsworth.

Two other poets of the school of Milton whom Wordsworth admired and from whom he caught some inspiration were

[1] *Spring*, ll. 574–581. [2] *Ibid.*, ll. 894–903.

Collins and Dyer. For the "bard of *The Fleece*," indeed, he had a special liking, and spoke of him as being gifted with more poetic imagination than any of his contemporaries except Collins and Thomson.[1] This is perhaps higher praise than Dyer merits; but there is that in him which appealed very strongly to Wordsworth. He shares with Thomson, moreover, the honor of taking the lead in bringing poetry back to nature, his *Grongar Hill* having appeared in the same year as Thomson's *Winter*. His best piece is *Grongar Hill*, which, in spite of its faults, is a delightful poem. *The Fleece*, his most ambitious work, is condemned by its subject: the wool-comber and the poet, do not, as Johnson remarks, form a very happily assorted combination. Nevertheless, it has a good deal of fine poetry in it. Here and there one can find a bit of description, — such, for instance, as that which tells of the

> "Flowery spring-time, when the new-dropt lamb,
> Tottering with weakness by his mother's side,
> Feels the fresh world about him," —[2]

which seems to come, like the best of Wordsworth's, straight from the hand of nature herself.

Collins's influence upon Wordsworth does not seem to have been as great as that of Dyer, and it was probably exerted indirectly rather than directly. Collins, as one of the first poets of his age to revive the languishing spirit of lyric poetry, is a true precursor of the romanticists. Gray, to be sure, shares with him in the honor of bringing about this revival; but the advantage of priority is with Collins. It is about the only advantage he has over Gray, however; for Gray, notwithstanding Johnson's disparagement of him, is clearly the greater poet. Collins may now and then strike a note of clearer lyric quality than any sounded by Gray; but his poetry, as a whole, cannot pretend to the deep human interest which Gray's undoubtedly possesses. It is somewhat odd, in view of this fact, that Wordsworth did not take more kindly to Gray. Possibly his love of simplicity was offended by Gray's fastidiousness; but probably

[1] See *Memoirs*, II, 215.

[2] *The Fleece*, Book I.

the earlier poet's attitude with regard to the question of poetic diction had as much to do as anything else with the later poet's lack of sympathy for him. Gray was a firm believer in poetic diction. "The language of the age," he once declared, "is never the language of poetry,"[1] — a view the exact opposite of that which Wordsworth took. But in spite of this difference of opinion, we should hardly have expected to see Wordsworth on the side of Johnson, as against Gray. Gray was as indubitably one of the most influential among those who began the reaction against the Augustan theory of poetry, as Wordsworth was among those who accomplished it. Like Collins, he rejected the heroic couplet in favor of the lyric, — the form in which, of all poetic forms, the poet's individuality has freest play; and, like Collins again, he gave free rein to his imagination. It is true that he has, especially in his earlier poems, much of the frigidity and fondness for stereotyped expressions and personifications of abstract ideas characteristic of the Augustans; but his later works show that he made at least an effort to get rid of these faults. Another quality in him which marks him out as a pioneer in the liberal movement is his love of nature. He had a fine and discriminating taste, not only for the quieter and more delicate beauties of nature, but for the wilder and more romantic as well, — a taste not very common in his day. His love of nature, to be sure, comes out much more strongly in his letters than in his poetry; but he could write admirable descriptive verse when he chose,[2] as the following stanza proves: —

> "There scattered oft, the earliest of the year,
> By hands unseen are showers of violets found;
> The redbreast loves to build and warble there,
> And little footsteps lightly press the ground."[3]

Gray's hesitancy in giving utterance in verse to his feeling for nature is, of course, but another sign of the spell which his

[1] See Gosse, *Works of Gray*, II, 108.

[2] He had scruples against indulging overmuch in descriptive poetry. See his letter to Beattie, Mitford's *Works of Gray*, II, 557.

[3] Written for insertion in the *Elegy*, but suppressed in order to avoid a long parenthesis. See Gosse, *Works of Gray*, I, 79.

age exercised upon him. English poetry could not free itself from conventionality at a bound. Not till well on in the latter half of the eighteenth century did the first outburst of really spontaneous song find vent for itself; and then it came from the poets of North, rather than of South, Britain. Scotland, never at any time thoroughly under the sway of the Augustans, grew tired of the false, Arcadian sentimentality rife in the early part of the century much sooner than England, — chiefly, no doubt, because of the more impressive character of Scottish scenery, as compared with English, but partly, also, on account of the revived interest in ballad literature, which manifested itself earlier and more effectively in Scotland than in England. As a factor in the reaction against classicism, the influence of the old ballads counted for a good deal. The ballads, to be sure, have a certain conventionality of their own; but, in contrast with eighteenth-century song, they are simplicity itself.

One of the first and most important of the Scottish poets to give voice in simple and unaffected language to genuine love of nature is John Logan. His *Braes of Yarrow*, which imitates the old Yarrow ballads, has many fine touches in it, as have also the *Ode written in Spring* and the *Ode written in Autumn*. His masterpiece, however, is the *Ode to the Cuckoo*,[1] which Burke thought the most beautiful lyric in our language, and which the elder Disraeli describes as "magical stanzas of picture, melody, and sentiment."[2] There can scarcely be any doubt that this little poem exercised a direct influence on Wordsworth's work. It was very popular in his day; and — what is especially significant — it has something of that blending of purely personal feeling with feeling excited by the beauty of nature which is so great a characteristic of his poetry.

Another minor Scottish poet who, like Logan, affected Wordsworth to some extent is Beattie. His *Minstrel*, directly suggested by Percy's essay on ancient minstrels in the *Reliques*, in its turn possibly gave Wordsworth the hint for his *Prelude*. There is, indeed, very little likeness in general between Beat-

[1] First published in 1770 in a miscellany containing the poems of Michael Bruce and others, and sometimes ascribed to Bruce.

[2] See *Calamities of Authors*, I, 218 (1812).

tie's rather feeble Spenserian stanzas and Wordsworth's blank verse; but there are undoubtedly passages in *The Minstrel* which, in a sense, anticipate some of Wordsworth's descriptions in *The Prelude*, though in Beattie's descriptions we miss Wordsworth's simplicity and directness. Beattie is too fond of generalizing to care much for the concrete. He is almost never specific; and, in consequence, his landscapes usually have an air of vagueness about them. He has nothing of Wordsworth's power of seeing the universal in the particular, of so seizing and presenting the essential characteristics of a scene that it becomes at once typical and individual.

It is not until we come to Burns that we have a poet who, in simplicity, directness, and power, in any way approaches Wordsworth. By all odds the greatest of the Scottish poets, Burns is also one of the greatest of those who helped to prepare the way for Wordsworth. He it was who first showed

> "How Verse may build a princely throne
> On humble truth."[1]

He was not the first, of course, to fill his canvas with sketches drawn from humble, every-day life, — Crabbe anticipated him in that; but his sketches are lighted up with the glow of a far livelier imagination, a far deeper human sympathy than those of Crabbe. Like Wordsworth, Burns sees in the humblest peasant first the man and then the accident of his station in life: —

> "The rank is but the guinea stamp,
> The man's the gowd for a' that."[2]

In the humanitarianism of Burns and of Wordsworth, equally intense in both poets though it is, there is, however, a difference. Burns has nothing of Wordsworth's speculative interest in the causes and consequences of social evils. With the peasant's keen sensitiveness to the practical effects of the inequalities which obtain in the social order, he is indignant when he sees a man who has worth in him fail to get the opportunity to show

[1] Wordsworth's *At the Grave of Burns.*
[2] Burns's *A Man's a Man for a' That.*

it, simply because he happens to be of humble birth; but his indignation does not lead him into any reflections upon the rights of man in the abstract. A similar difference is noticeable in the attitude toward nature which the two poets observe. Burns's references to nature, as Shairp has remarked, are "almost all incidental and by the way."[1] It is rarely that he addresses her directly, or attempts to penetrate into any of her mysteries, as Wordsworth is fond of doing. A "vernal wood" appeals to his sense of the beautiful as strongly as to Wordsworth's; but it has little to offer him in the way of suggestions about "moral evil or of good." Not principles, nor truths, but things, and especially living things, interest him. Overflowing with vitality himself, he finds in the animate, rather than in the inanimate in nature, that which calls forth his sympathy. Inanimate nature may serve him as a background for his picture, but scarcely ever for the picture itself.

In this respect, as well as in some others, he is less truly the immediate forerunner of Wordsworth than Cowper, whose work, however, was practically all done before that of Burns was begun. Between Cowper and Wordsworth there are, in fact, many rather striking points of resemblance. In the first place, they have a certain degree of community in their views about their own art. Cowper, as well as Wordsworth, turned in avowed discontent from the elaborate artifice and hollow generalities of the school of Pope, and sought to find a method which should permit him to express himself more truthfully and at the same time with more simplicity. Disgusted with the affectations of his predecessors, he would have no borrowed sentiment, no sham descriptions in his poetry. Whatever else he might be, he would at least be sincere. "My descriptions," says he, in writing to a friend about *The Task*, "are all from nature; not one of them second-hand. My delineations of the heart are from my own experience; not one of them borrowed from books, or in the least degree conjectural."[2] In this frank statement we can read the doom of the "old, conventional feigning" not less certainly than in Wordsworth's famous Preface.

[1] J. C. Shairp, *The Poetic Interpretation of Nature* p. 217, (1877).
[2] See Southey's *Works of Cowper*, III, 138 (Bohn).

It is not only in his attack upon the school of Pope, and in his introducing a personal element into his poetry, that Cowper anticipates Wordsworth: he anticipates him, also, in seeing in nature a source whence man may derive moral and religious inspiration, as well as æsthetic delight. One of the chief tendencies of *The Task*, as he himself says in a letter to a friend, is "to discountenance the modern enthusiasm after a London life, and to recommend rural ease and leisure as friendly to the cause of piety and virtue."[1] The moral atmosphere of the country, in his view, is more wholesome than that of the city: in the country, one may have opportunities for quiet meditation in presence of nature's most impressive scenes; and in such meditations

> "The heart
> May give a useful lesson to the head,
> And learning wiser grow without his books."[2]

"Books," he says, "are not seldom talismans and spells;"[3] but

> "Trees, and rivulets, whose rapid course
> Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,
> And sheepwalks populous with bleating lambs,
> And lanes, in which the primrose ere her time
> Peeps through the moss that clothes the hawthorn root,
> Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and Truth,
> Not shy, as in the world, and to be won
> By slow solicitation, seize at once
> The roving thought, and fix it on themselves."[4]

Man has an

> "Inborn inextinguishable thirst
> Of rural scenes."[5]

Between his soul and the spirit of nature there exists a divinely appointed affinity; and in recognizing this affinity lies his best

[1] See Southey's *Works of Cowper*, III, 139 (Bohn).
[2] *The Task*, Book VI, ll. 85–87.
[3] *Ibid.*, Book VI, l. 98.
[4] *Ibid.*, Book VI, ll. 109–117. Compare these lines with, for instance, *Expostulation and Reply* and *The Tables Turned*, which contain the very essence of Wordsworth's "natural religion."
[5] *Ibid.*, Book IV, ll. 767–768.

chance of obtaining, if not happiness, at least peace. Happiness, complete spiritual satisfaction, Cowper would, of course, base upon obedience to the will of God as made known through divine revelation. His Christian piety was of too austere a kind to permit him to think of allowing nature to take the place of God. He believed in the beneficent influence of nature, but not in the doctrine that a simple return to primitive conditions of society would of itself enable man to get rid of evil. Nature can help, but she cannot heal the sin-stricken soul: —

> "Retreat
> Cannot indeed to guilty man restore
> Lost innocence, or cancel follies past;
> But it has peace, and much secures the mind
> From all assaults of evil."[1]

As a final point, it may be noted that Cowper, like Wordsworth, is thoroughly in sympathy with the liberal and humanitarian movement of his age. He has not, indeed, the cheerful optimism of Wordsworth, — the very thought of the "wrong and outrage with which earth is filled" sickens him and makes him apprehensive for the future; but his sense of the brotherhood of man is just as deep, and his love of liberty just as passionate as Wordsworth's: —

> "'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
> Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,
> And we are weeds without it."[2]

Liberty, indeed, is his favorite goddess; and his frequent apostrophes to her show his strong revolutionary tendencies. His denunciation of the Bastille — that dread symbol of the tyranny of kings — reads almost like a prophecy of the fall he wished might overtake it, and which did, in fact, overtake it soon, though, alas! not soon enough to find him in a mood for rejoicing over the event: —

> "Ye horrid towers, the abode of broken hearts,
> Ye dungeons, and ye cages of despair,

[1] See *The Task*, Book III, ll. 676–680.
[2] *Ibid.*, Book V, ll. 446–448.

> That monarchs have supplied from age to age
> With music, such as suit their sovereign ears,
> The sighs and groans of miserable men!
> There's not an English heart that would not leap
> To hear that ye were fallen at last." [1]

Had he been younger, had even his later years not been clouded with that melancholia which was the bane of his life, he, too, might have hailed the Revolution in France as the dawn of a new era for mankind, and have thought it bliss to be alive at such a dawn.

[1] *The Task*, Book V, ll. 384–390.

III

HIS THEORY OF POETRY

The principal aim of eighteenth-century poetry, it should be kept in mind, was to express obvious, commonplace truth, — to express, in short,

"What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed."

The poet was regarded, not as one who had new perceptions of the beauty or meaning of things to offer, but rather as one who had the ability to express familiar perceptions in a new way. If he could please by mere novelty of expression in reproducing familiar matter, he was held to have furnished his *raison d'être*. Whether he were true to nature or not was altogether a secondary matter. Indeed, it was difficult for him to be faithful to nature and at the same time be faithful to his poetic creed: "true poetry," so ran the canon, "was nature to advantage dressed," not nature naked and unadorned. As for questioning the authority of the canon, that idea was slow to enter into his head. "Poetry," said Jeffrey, whose point of view is practically that of the eighteenth century, "has this much, at least, in common with religion, that its standards were fixed long ago by certain inspired writers whose authority it is no longer lawful to call in question."[1] This, it is needless to say, had been the point of view adopted by Johnson, — the one great critic of the century, — who never so much as dreamed of raising the question, What is poetry? This question, he thought, had been answered definitively by the practice of the writers universally acknowledged to be classics, and any attempt to raise it again should be set down as mere ignorant presumption. But the revolutionary tendencies of the latter part of the century brought about a change. Under the impulse of Rousseau's writings, men began to question old opinions. The individual,

[1] See the *Edinburgh Review*, No. I, p. 63.

who had been almost completely suppressed in the earlier part of the century, began at last to assert himself, and dogmatism had to give way.

It is interesting to note that Wordsworth, whose predominant share in the attack upon classicism has made him the representative of the new movement, did not come forward as an iconoclast from the very first. His famous Preface did not appear with the first but with the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, — the Advertisement to the first edition merely intimating that the author was experimenting, or feeling his way toward a new theory. In the *Evening Walk* and the *Descriptive Sketches*, published in 1793, there is no hint of any iconoclastic purpose. Here, as far as style goes, Wordsworth follows, in the main, his predecessors of the classic school — or rather, tries to outdo them. The *Evening Walk* and the *Descriptive Sketches* have, indeed, a good deal of originality. They show that reflectiveness and that close and accurate observation of nature which are characteristic of the poet's later work; but they show, also, the very worst faults of style characteristic of the classic writers at their worst. They abound in personifications of abstract ideas, in poetical epithets, and in unnatural inversions.

A passage from one of them will serve to illustrate at once the quality of Wordsworth's early work and the style which he afterward condemned so severely: —

> " 'Here,' cried a swain, whose venerable head
> Bloom'd with the snow-drops of Man's narrow bed,
> Last night, while by his dying fire, as clos'd
> The day, in luxury my limbs repos'd,
> 'Here Penury oft from misery's mount will guide
> Ev'n to the summer door his icy tide,
> And here the avalanche of Death destroy
> The little cottage of domestic Joy.
> But ah! th' unwilling mind may more than trace
> The general sorrows of the human race:
> The churlish gales, that unremitting blow
> Cold from necessity's continual snow,
> To us the gentle groups of bliss deny
> That on the noon-day bank of leisure lie.
> Yet more; the tyrant Genius, still at strife
> With all the tender Charities of life,
> When close and closer they begin to strain,

No fond hand left to staunch th' unclosing vein,
Tearing their bleeding ties leaves Age to groan
On his wet bed, abandon'd and alone.
For ever, fast as they of strength become
To pay the filial debt, for food to roam,
The father, forc'd by Powers that only deign
That solitary Man disturb their reign,
From his bare nest amid the storms of heaven
Drives, eagle-like, his sons as he was driven,
His last dread pleasure! watches to the plain —
And never, eagle-like, beholds again.'" [1]

Only five years intervened between the publication of the poem from which these lines are taken and the *Lyrical Ballads;* yet within that period Wordsworth's ideas about poetry and poetic style underwent a complete and radical change. He not only reformed his own style, which became as simple as before it had been artificial, but he conceived the purpose of reforming poetic style in general. The explanation of this transformation of the youthful classicist into the ardent romanticist is to be found, no doubt, largely in the tendencies of the age, which were beginning to run pretty strongly in the direction of romanticism; but the poet's contact with the revolutionary movement in France during his visits to that country certainly hastened the transformation.

That the French Revolution affected him profoundly, we know from his own direct testimony. At first, its effect upon him was simply exhilarating. He hailed it as the dawn of a new era for mankind, and rejoiced in it: —

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven!" [2]

Those who had watched and waited for the dawn could now, at last, leave their dreams and be up and doing. The world lay plastic before them, and they could mould it at their will. But alas! disenchantment followed swiftly; and the shock of the disillusion so disturbed the poet's being that he suffered, in consequence, a little revolution within himself. It was to

[1] *Descriptive Sketches*, London, 1793, pp. 41–43.
[2] *The Prelude*, Book XI, ll. 108–109.

no purpose that he sought to break the force of the shock by an acceptance of the necessitarian doctrines preached by Godwin about that time. The Godwinian necessitarianism so upset his preconceived notions as to moral obligations that he came at last to the very verge of absolute scepticism, and was for yielding up moral questions in despair. He recovered his mental and moral equilibrium ultimately, indeed; but his recovery was due, not to any process of reasoning, but rather to "those sweet counsels between head and heart"[1] induced by the companionship of his sister and the calming influence of nature.

It was impossible that he should have come through such a crisis as this without having his ideas about art, as well as about politics and morals, seriously disturbed. When, therefore, he gave up speculating as to

> "The ground
> Of obligation, what the rule and whence
> The sanction,"[2]

and went back to poetry, seeking in it alone his true "office upon earth," it is not surprising that that office appeared to him far other than it had done in his earlier years. When the *Evening Walk* and the *Descriptive Sketches* were written, he had not come to his true self. What he had to say in those poems, he was content to say in the conventional language of the poetry of his day. The experience he had just gone through, however, made him, as it were, another man, and enabled him to speak another language, — a language in which insincerity and artificiality had no place. He felt that the models he had been using were false and vicious, and must be discarded, if he would hope to attain to a style at once original and truthful. For the kind of poetry which had prevailed in England from Pope's day down to his own time, he had come to feel little but contempt. In his view, it was for the most part "endless talking about things nobody cares anything for," — gossip from the balls, routs, clubs, and coffee-houses, and things of the like trivial or ephemeral interest. Instead of singing of these things, he would sing of the abiding verities of life, —

[1] *The Prelude*, Book XI, l. 353. [2] *Ibid.*, Book XI, l. 299–301.

> "Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope,
> And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith;
> Of blessed consolations in distress;
> Of moral strength, and intellectual Power
> Of joy in widest commonalty spread;
> Of the individual Mind that keeps her own
> Inviolate retirement, subject there
> To Conscience only, and the law supreme
> Of that Intelligence which governs all."[1]

To sing "Of joy in widest commonalty spread": these words sum up better than any others that could be found the great purpose of his life henceforth. They give us, so to speak, the very spirit of his poetry, and indicate at the same time wherein that poetry was new and original. Before his day, poetry had been written almost solely from the aristocratic point of view. In him we see the change to a point of view more in keeping with the democratic ideas resulting from the liberal movement of the age. The eighteenth-century poets had regarded humble and rustic life as beneath their notice, except in so far as it could be made to appear picturesque, or to give variety to the picture of life as a whole. They looked upon the different classes of society as having each of them "a distinct character," and the emotions of the one class as being "radically and obviously distinct" from those of the other. "The love, or grief, or anger of a clown, a tradesman, or a market-wench" was not for them the same thing as "the love, or grief, or indignation of an enlightened and refined character,"[2] but in itself an entirely different emotion, — an emotion essentially vulgar, and therefore unsuitable for artistic presentation in its natural state. To such views as these, Wordsworth was diametrically opposed. Humble and rustic life, he argued, was just as worthy of honor, and just as suitable for faithful artistic treatment as urban and refined life. Indeed, if one condition has any advantage over the other, the advantage, he contended, lies with humble, rustic life, "because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and

[1] See Preface to *The Excursion*.

[2] The quotations are from Jeffrey. See the *Edinburgh Review*, No. I, p. 66.

more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings coexist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings; and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature."[1] Hence his determination to choose his subjects chiefly from common, everyday life. The eighteenth-century poets had underestimated the artistic worth of common life. He would correct their false estimate. Instead of viewing common life wholly from without and in a matter-of-fact way, as his predecessors had done, he would view it from within and under the illuminating light of a sympathetic imagination.

This gives us the key to his whole theory of poetry, which is, in effect, an assertion, as against the eighteenth-century writers, of the supremacy of the imaginative, over all the other faculties of the poet. The essence of poetry, he says, consists in an appeal to the imagination.[2] The poet is a man who is "endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, . . . delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet . . . do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than anything which, from the motions of their

[1] *Prose Works*, I, pp. 48–49 (Knight).

[2] "Whatever is addressed to the imagination," he once remarked to H. C. Robinson, "is essentially poetical; but very pleasing verses, deserving all praise, not so addressed, are not poetical." See Robinson's *Diary*, II, 229.

own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves."[1] That is to say, he is one who has deeper and more varied passions, more delicate perceptions than other men in virtue of the fact that he is endowed with a livelier sensitiveness to emotion, and a keener insight into the beauty and meaning of things. To be recognized as a poet, he must, of course, translate his passions and perceptions into expression, and translate them in such a way that his hearers or readers will make them their own and take pleasure in them. This he does by the aid of his faculty of imaginative representation, which enables him to give to the accounts of what he sees, thinks, and feels "a certain coloring of imagination," whereby his hearers or readers may be induced to see, think, and feel as he does.

Precisely how this coloring is given, Wordsworth does not attempt to show, that being beyond the scope to which he limits himself in any statement of his theory. Of one thing he is sure, however, and that is, that it cannot be given simply by calling things by fine-sounding names, — that is to say, by the use of a conventional poetic diction. The poet's aim being to awaken in his hearers or readers emotions similar to those naturally produced in real life, he ought obviously to use language naturally associated with those emotions, — in other words, the language of real life. To use a conventional or artificial language would frustrate his aim, because it would render impossible the attainment in his poetry of anything like liveliness and truth, — qualities in the highest degree essential to all true poetry. It is, of course, inevitable that his representations of reality will be in some degree conventional as compared with reality itself; but the conventionality should be reduced to a minimum. The poet should endeavor to make his representations as real as the limitations of his art permit: he should seek "to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, nay, for short spaces of time, perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs."[2] In short, he should strive to attain the highest truth possible;

[1] *Prose Works*, I, 57–58. [2] *Ibid.*, I, 58.

and this truth, he should remember, can be attained only when the means used to attain it are as free from artifice as possible. The *sine qua non* of a true and perfect art, is a true and perfect medium in which to express that art.

Such, in brief, is the theory propounded in the famous Preface to the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, and in subsequent additions to it. It is essentially a democratic theory, — a product, as one can easily see, of that democratic movement which found its first and most eloquent expression in the writings of Rousseau, and which took its most practical shape in the revolutions which established republics in France and in America. Hence the suspicion and distrust which it excited at first among the more conservative critics of the day. "A splenetic and idle discontent with the existing institutions of society" [1] was manifestly at the bottom of it. In making peasants think and feel like their betters, Wordsworth was evidently bent on upsetting the constituted order of things; he was seeking to revolutionize, not only poetry but politics as well; worse still, he was aiming a blow at polite society itself. "Why," asks Jeffrey, in his review of *The Excursion*, "should Mr. Wordsworth have made his chosen hero a superannuated peddler? What but the most provoking perversity of taste, could induce any one to place his chosen advocate of wisdom and virtue in so absurd and fantastic a condition?" [2] If peasants and peddlers were to be set up as the exemplars of all the most praiseworthy virtues, there would soon be an end to good taste and good manners in society.

It is impossible nowadays, of course, not to see that Jeffrey had a certain amount of reason on his side in objecting to Wordsworth's metamorphosing peddlers into sages and philosophers. Jeffrey had a keen eye for detecting sins against obvious fact; and here, it must be admitted, Wordsworth fairly laid himself open to attack. His protest against the narrow and unsympathetic attitude of the eighteenth-century writers towards rustic life was both timely and just, and has had a deep and lasting effect upon English literature; but the protest was carried to rather questionable lengths when it was

[1] See the *Edinburgh Review*, No. I, p. 71.
[2] *Ibid.*, No. XLVIII, pp. 29–30.

contended that the peasant is naturally a better subject for artistic treatment than the man of more refinement, inasmuch as his life is simpler and freer from artificial restraints. It is not easy to see that the peasant's emotions are any the deeper or purer, his moral and spiritual intuitions any the clearer, from the simplicity of his life. On the contrary, experience would seem to point to an opposite conclusion: —

> "Nature ne'er could find the way
> Into the heart of Peter Bell."
>
> * * * * *
>
> "A primrose by a river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more."[1]

And the Peter Bells, it is to be feared, are by no means rare in humble and rustic life.

As to the dictum that the language of poetry should be the language of real life, critical opinion is not, it would seem, even yet fully decided, though the tendency has evidently been to reject it. To many it appears as if Wordsworth, in seeking to get rid of the gaudy and superfluous ornamentation with which the eighteenth-century writers had encumbered poetry, gets rid, in effect, of ornamentation altogether. His principle, they say, is too far-reaching: if strictly and logically carried out, it would lead to the rejection, not merely of the beauty and grace of art but even of art itself, because it would lead to the degradation of art to the position of a mere copy of nature and nothing more.

The point is a subtle one, for art is a thing of so indefinable a nature that no one can undertake to determine precisely in what it consists, or what form it must necessarily assume. Nevertheless, it seems safe enough to say that the principle for which Wordsworth contends is, in the main, a sound one. Much, indeed, depends upon the way in which we interpret him, for unfortunately he has not expressed himself either very happily or very clearly. For instance, when he says that "there neither is, nor can be, any *essential* difference between

[1] *Peter Bell*, ll. 244–250.

the language of prose and metrical composition," we are left in some doubt as to what he means by the term "language." Does he mean "style," "diction," or both? Possibly he means both, but the whole trend of his argument would seem to indicate that what he had chiefly in mind was "diction." And if we interpret the term in this sense, no serious objection can be taken to his dictum. The essence of poetry lies, of course, not so much in the words themselves, as in the way in which the words are used. It is the thing described, — that is, if it is described imaginatively by the true poet, — which gives poetic character to the language used, not the language to the thing. For instance, in the following lines, —

> "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
> Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
> Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night
> Become the touches of sweet harmony," —[1]

there is not a word, with the possible exception of "harmony," which has not been in daily use in the most ordinary prose for hundreds of years; but the lines, nevertheless, are poetical in the highest degree. Wherein lies their charm? No one can say precisely, but every one can see that it does not lie in a diction in any way different from that of the prose of common, everyday life. This does not prove, of course, that legitimate poetic effects cannot be produced by the use of words not commonly heard in real life; but it does prove that the use of such words is not *essential* in poetry. And this is really all that Wordsworth tries to prove. What he insists upon is, after all, no more than this, namely, that a vocabulary which meets all the needs of actual passion will be found quite adequate for the artistic delineation of that passion, — that is, if the poet's aim is to be true to nature. Of course, if that is not his aim, no more need be said. Any one who regards poetry as "a matter of amusement and idle pleasure," merely as a thing which owes its existence to the mere caprice of fancy and serves its purpose when it ministers to the same caprice, may properly enough argue that any language which fancy may invent will be a suitable language in which to express it.

[1] *Twelfth Night*, Act I, Scene 1.

Needless to say, Wordsworth took no such view of his art as that. For him, poetry was "the breath and finer spirit, . . . the first and last of all knowledge,"[1] and to be a poet was to fill the noblest office to which man can aspire. The poet's mission is not that of a purveyor of mere amusement but rather that of one who ministers to the deepest needs of his fellowmen. Like Phœbus, — the god of light, of poetry, of prophecy, and of medicine, — "he must diffuse health and light; he must prophesy to his generation; he must teach the present age by counselling with the future."[2] It was this high conception of the dignity and seriousness of his calling that led Wordsworth to insist that poetry should not be suffered to depart from the truth of things but be kept as near to nature as possible. And in insisting upon this, he did not forget that poetry neither can nor should copy nature exactly. Art, as none knew better than he, is not an exact reproduction, but an imaginative transformation of nature. The appropriate employment of poetry, he observes, is "to treat of things not as they *are* but as they *appear;* not as they exist in themselves but as they *seem* to exist to the *senses* and to the *passions.*"[3] In other words, the business of the poet is to give a representation of things as they appear to him in the light of his imagination, and the only obligation imposed upon him is that his representation shall be such as will afford his hearers or readers pleasure.

[1] See *Prose Works*, I, 62. [2] See *Memoirs*, II, 7.
[3] See *Prose Works*, II, 226.

IV

THE SHORTER POEMS

In his revolt against classicism, Wordsworth turned, as did many of the romanticists of his day, to the old popular ballad for a model. Interest in ballad literature was, indeed, quite general during the latter part of the eighteenth century: it had received its first great stimulus from Percy's *Reliques*, which appeared in 1767, and it had grown in intensity until by the end of the century almost every writer of verse was more or less affected by the influence of the ballad. Wordsworth's subjection to the ballad, however, was perhaps more complete than that of any of his contemporaries. He saw in it a kind of poetry at once democratic in its sympathies and unadorned in its style, and thought it afforded the means of effecting a much needed reform in English poetry. For a time, therefore, he devoted the greater part of his energies to the production of poems imitative of the ballad style.

The ballad style, however, was really unsuited to his genius, and he did not long employ it. His ballad imitations belong, for the most part, to a comparatively early period of his career, — to the period, that is, of the *Lyrical Ballads* and of the *Poems in Two Volumes;* and they are, on the whole, about the least successful of all his poems. Only a few of them — such as *We are Seven* and *Lucy Gray* — can be unreservedly praised. *We are Seven*, indeed, has little that is characteristic of the ballad about it, — its charm being due to the excellence with which the childish innocence and ignorance of the mystery of death is pictured; but *Lucy Gray* is good as a ballad. The story here is simply and effectively told, after the manner of the best of the old ballads, and is not marred by any of the puerilities which disfigure, for instance, *The Thorn*, *The Idiot Boy*, and *Peter Bell*. In these poems, Wordsworth carries his passion for realism and simplicity to extremes, and the result is failure.

It is refreshing to turn from these imitations to poems which have the ring of genuineness about them, — to his "nature" lyrics, for example. Here Wordsworth is often at his very best. His lyric power, indeed, is remarkable. No other poet of the

romantic movement, except Shelley, surpasses him in this respect. It is interesting to note, however, that the lyrical impulse is with him a sort of secondary impulse. In his youthful pieces and in the poems written in what may be called his storm and stress period, there is almost no trace of it whatever; and even in the *Lyrical Ballads* there is only one poem — the *Lines Written in Early Spring* — in which he strikes the true lyric note. But in the ten years following the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* — the flourishing period of his creative genius — the number of lyrics he produced is considerable. Among the best of these are *To the Cuckoo*, which has some suggestions of Logan's poem on the same subject; *The Green Linnet;* and *The Daffodils* ("I wandered lonely as a cloud"). Rarely, indeed, has lyric poet been more felicitous than Wordsworth in *The Daffodils*. He has here caught the spirit of his subject perfectly, and has pictured in a way almost beyond praise that brightness, one might say animation, which the face of nature sometimes assumes for us. Of the like quality are such pieces as *The Solitary Reaper; Yarrow Unvisited;* the "Lucy" poems; *The Fountain; To a Skylark* ("Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky"); and "She was a Phantom of Delight." These poems have not, perhaps, quite that intensity of emotion which characterizes the lyric at its very best; but they have other qualities that go far to make up for it, namely, imagination, simplicity of diction, and a delightfully easy flow of verse. *The Solitary Reaper*, indeed, has a witchery about it that fairly holds one spellbound, charming not only by the harmony of its verse — a harmony that words can scarcely do justice to — but by a kind of subtle suggestiveness that gives it a meaning very much deeper than that which seems to lie on the surface: —

"Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;

* * * * *

"Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

* * * * *

"Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago."

Had Wordsworth written in this vein oftener, he would have rivalled Shelley in that master's own peculiar province. As it is, he must be content to take secondary rank there. He has not Shelley's command over the musical qualities of language, nor yet his conciseness and vigor. Diffuseness, indeed, is his besetting sin. He never seems to have known, as he admitted to a correspondent once with regard to *The Prelude*, how to condense judiciously. One might cite numbers of his poems where a little condensation would have effected a great improvement. But he did not like to waste a thought. Rather than do that, he would extend a poem to almost any length, or, if that were inexpedient, write another poem on the same subject, — witness, for example, the "Celandine" and the "Daisy" series.

It is to this lack of the critical faculty that we must ascribe most of Wordsworth's failures. His inspiration came to him only by fits and starts, but unfortunately he did not always know when it was with him and when it was not. Hence the unevenness of his work, and the frequency with which the most distressing contrasts present themselves, especially in those pieces where he is dealing, as is his wont, with incidents and situations chosen from common life. Compare, for instance, the figure of the old man in *Simon Lee* with the similar figure in *Resolution and Independence*. How impressive is the latter in contrast with the former! In the one case, the poet has succeeded in investing his subject with that coloring of imagination in virtue of which the prosaic ceases to be prosaic and becomes poetic; in the other case, he has not. The old huntsman with his swollen ankles and thin dry legs is reality, hard, cold, and uninteresting; the old leech-gatherer, motionless and statuesque-like on the lonely moor, is also reality, but reality transformed by the magic touch of the poet's imagination. The difference between the two is immense.

Perhaps the best examples of the wonderful transforming power of Wordsworth's imagination are to be found in some

of his purely descriptive pieces. *Yew-Trees*, for instance, gives us a striking illustration of it. The old yew-trees which the poet describes — "those fraternal four of Borrowdale" — were doubtless to the inhabitants of the dale and to chance visitors simply fine old trees and "nothing more"; but to the poet they are a "natural temple," where

> "Ghostly Shapes
> May meet at noontide; Fear and trembling Hope,
> Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton
> And Time the Shadow."

The fragment called *A Night-piece* is also a good illustration in point. The description here has more definiteness, indeed, than that in the *Yew-Trees*, though with all its sharpness of outline it has nothing of photographic exactness about it.

Wordsworth never aims to present us with an exact copy of nature. "In every scene," as he himself once remarked, "many of the most brilliant details are but accidental; a true eye for nature does not note them, or at least dwell on them."[1] Realist though he is, he is no slave to fact. He prefers the world of everyday life, indeed, to the world of romance; but it is not because the marvellous or the wonderful has no charm for him: —

> "The common growth of mother-earth
> Suffices me — her tears, her mirth,
> Her humblest mirth and tears.
>
> "The dragon's wing, the magic ring,
> I shall not covet for my dower,
> If I along that lowly way
> With sympathetic heart may stray,
> And with a soul of power.
>
> "These given, what more need I desire
> To stir, to soothe, or elevate?
> What nobler marvels than the mind
> May in life's daily prospect find,
> May find or there create?"[2]

[1] Aubrey de Vere, "Recollections of Wordsworth," *Essays*, II, 277.
[2] Prologue to *Peter Bell*, ll. 133–145.

There are marvels everywhere, were the eye but trained to see them; and the greatest marvels of all are those to be found lurking beneath the exterior of the most common things. Wordsworth, therefore, never aims to picture nature as she appears to the outward, bodily eye, merely, but tries rather to represent her as she appears to that inward, spiritual eye which sees into "the life of things." He aims to describe the heart, rather than the face of nature. He is true, indeed, to the outward appearances of things so far as he finds it necessary to describe them; but he describes them only as means to an end, and that end is the revelation of the truth underlying phenomena.

Hence it is that nature, though she may appeal strongly to his purely æsthetic sense, always makes her strongest appeal to his moral or spiritual sense. The pleasure which a beautiful or moving scene gives him is quickly merged in the succeeding and greater pleasure of musing upon it, and trying to find out its significance as a manifestation of that "Spirit of the Universe" which gives

> "to forms and images a breath
> And everlasting motion."

In all his descriptions of nature, his highest aim is to represent her as instinct with spirituality. It is this spiritualizing of nature, as it were, that distinguishes him most from all other poets who have dealt with nature, and especially from those who preceded him. Cowper, indeed, has a suggestion of it, but only a suggestion. Wordsworth was the first, as he still remains the greatest, English poet to make the heart of nature speak familiarly to the heart of man; and this has given him a peculiar hold upon those who love the poetry of nature.

To call Wordsworth *the* poet of nature, however, as many do, is to do him an injustice, — an injustice he himself would have been the first to resent,[1] for his main theme is, after all, "no other than the heart of man." In his youth, indeed, nature had been "all in all" to him; but in his later years it was not so.

[1] He said to Henry Crabb Robinson more than once "that he did not expect or desire from posterity any other fame than that which would be given him for the way in which his poems exhibit man in his essentially *human* character and relations." See Robinson's *Diary*, II, 200.

He learned to love nature not so much for her own sake as for what she means to man. In most of his poems the interest centres in man rather than in nature. Nature is there, of course; but she is there because, without her, man does not seem to be himself. In *Michael* and *The Brothers*, for example, nature appears only as a background; but how important that background is! Take it away, and you take away almost the very essence of the poem. Throughout Wordsworth's poetry, indeed, man and nature are, for the most part, inseparable: the one rarely appears without the other.

He is, therefore, as much the poet of man as of nature. The humanitarian element is as pronounced in his poetry as in that of any other English poet. One of his chief aims, indeed, is to vindicate the dignity and worth of man as man. Of *Michael* and *The Brothers*, he himself remarks that they were written "with a view to show that men who do not wear fine clothes can feel deeply." Most of his poems, we might add, were written with this same aim in view. To us of the present day, it may seem a little odd perhaps that a poet should think it necessary to demonstrate such a point; it should rather be taken for granted. But Wordsworth lived, we should remember, in a transition age, — an age which was witnessing, in both the world of art and of politics, the change from the aristocratic to the democratic point of view. In fact, to Wordsworth himself is due no small share of the credit for bringing about that change. He made his generation feel, as no other poet of his day did, that man is dear to man, no matter what may be the shape or the color of his cloak. And he did this by representing the homely rustic characters he was so fond of describing in their fundamentally human relations, rather than in their relations to society at large.

In his character-drawing, as in his description of scenery, his aim is to present the essential, and to leave the rest, largely, to the imagination of his reader. Hence few of his characters are very strongly individualized. For the most part they are but vaguely outlined types — often impressive, indeed, but seldom with much vitality in them. In the pictures he has given us of the dalesmen of his native hills, he is, perhaps, truer to life than in any others. These dalesmen are no imaginary and im-

possible beings, but just such men as he had known and lived among all his days, — hard-featured and hard-working men, mostly, but still very human and very sensitive to the joys and sorrows of life. What true dignity and nobleness of character there is in the old shepherd, Michael! And what pathos there is in his fitful and listless attempts to finish his sheepfold, after he hears of his son's disgrace and flight! —

> "Many and many a day he thither went,
> And never lifted up a single stone."

The reason Wordsworth succeeds best in describing the type of character portrayed in *Michael* and *The Brothers* is, of course, chiefly because he knew that type best; but the fact that it was the type for which he himself might have stood as the representative was not without its effect upon him. His ideal man is but a variation of himself. As Dean Church puts it: "The ideal man with Wordsworth is the hard-headed, frugal, unambitious dalesman of his own hills, with his strong affections, his simple tastes, and his quiet and beautiful home; and this dalesman, built up by communion with nature and by meditation into the poet-philosopher, with his serious faith and his never-failing spring of enjoyment, is himself." [1] Types of character wholly alien to his own have little attraction for him. He is content to look into the depths of his own heart and to represent what he sees there. His field of vision, therefore, is a very limited one: it takes in only a few types. It is *man*, in fact, rather than *men*, that interests him.

His interest in man being thus largely contemplative, he does not concern himself much with the busy, active life of the world. It is what man *is*, not what man *does*, that absorbs his attention. Hence he seldom describes action. Many of his shorter poems, indeed, are in narrative form, but action plays a comparatively small part in them. As for romance, he seems to have had a sort of contempt for it, as if it were a thing unworthy of the attention of a serious-minded poet. "The moving accident is not my trade," he is constrained to say in apology for breaking off in the middle of the story in *Heart-leap Well;* and in

[1] See Ward's *English Poets*, IV, 14.

Brougham Castle and *The White Doe of Rylstone* — the only poems in which he is thoroughly romantic — he endeavors, by one device or another, to avoid appearing in the rôle of the writer of romance. In *Brougham Castle*, he ascribes the lay to an ancient minstrel, characteristically adding a comment upon it in his own person at the end; and in the Fenwick note on *The White Doe*, he deprecates any comparison being made between his poem and those of Scott on similar subjects. "Sir Walter," he says, "pursued the customary and very natural course of conducting an action, presenting various turns of fortune, to some outstanding point on which the mind might rest as a termination or catastrophe. The course I attempted to pursue is entirely different. Everything that is attempted by the principal personages in *The White Doe* fails, so far as its object is external and substantial. So far as it is moral and spiritual it succeeds. The heroine of the poem knows that her duty is not to interfere with the current of events, either to forward or to delay them, but

> 'To abide
> The shock, and finally secure
> O'er pain and grief a triumph sure.'

. . . The anticipated beatification, if I may so say, of her mind, and the apotheosis of the companion of her solitude, are the points at which the poem aims, and constitute its legitimate catastrophe." The purpose of the poem is thus not to tell a story but to portray the development of a character under circumstances requiring peculiar fortitude. So far as a story is told, it is told only incidentally; and the heroine takes little part in it. Suffering, not action, is her lot — the "beatification" of her mind being accomplished by means of grief, solitude, and the companionship of the white doe.

Wordsworth was not, indeed, entirely devoid of sympathy with a life of active heroism, as he shows clearly enough in such poems as *The Happy Warrior* and *Dion*. *The Happy Warrior* is, in a way, a study of success in active life, and of that kind of success, in particular, which leaves behind it no taint of wrong or crime to mar the pleasure of its memory. *Dion*

on the other hand, is a study of failure. Dion, the Syracusan, when the opportunity comes to him to put into practice those lofty principles of civil government which he has imbibed from his master, Plato, fails, morally as well as materially, and fails because he yields to the specious plea that the greater good which may follow a wrong act excuses the lesser evil. For Wordsworth, there can be no compromise between good and evil. The ideal statesman must "trace the ideal path of right," must never overleap "the eternal bars": —

> "Him only pleasure leads, and peace attends,
> Him, only him, the shield of Jove defends,
> Whose means are fair and spotless as his ends."

It is sometimes made a ground of objection to these poems, as well as to *Laodamia* and to the *Ode to Duty*, which we may associate with them, that the moralist is too much in evidence in them. And possibly the ethical note in them is rather insistent. But the like objection might also be urged against most of Wordsworth's poems: the ethical note is a dominant one nearly everywhere in his poetry. Art divorced from morality has little or no meaning for him. Nevertheless, *Laodamia* and the *Ode to Duty* are very fine poems. *Laodamia* has a loftiness of tone and a classic elevation of style not unworthy of Milton. Wordsworth himself is said to have coupled it with *Lycidas*, and to have declared the two poems to be twin immortals. He was not wrong; they are twin immortals. Wordsworth's ode has not perhaps quite that perfection of form which characterizes Milton's famous elegy; but it has fully as much depth of feeling. Wordsworth has sometimes been blamed for his lack of passion, and it is true that the passional element in his poetry is very small; but the "Lucy" poems and *Laodamia* quite dispose of the idea that he could not portray passion if he would. The *Ode to Duty* is no less excellent than *Laodamia*. Nowhere, indeed, has the "Stern Daughter of the Voice of God" been more nobly hymned than here. The poem has a vigor, a sincerity of feeling, and above all an elevation of thought that combine to give it very high rank among the poems of its kind.

To call the *Ode to Duty* Wordsworth's greatest work, as some do, is, however, to over-rate it. It is not so fine a poem as either *Tintern Abbey* or the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*. It has nothing like their imaginative power; nor has it the exquisite charm of versification which they possess. In *Tintern Abbey*, — that finest of all those reflective poems wherein Wordsworth has described his intimate communings with nature, — the "impassioned music" of the verse sometimes rises into an organ-like roll that recalls Milton at his best; and as for the verse in the great *Ode*, it is, we may safely say, well-nigh incomparable. Where, for example, shall we find lines more perfectly expressive of the thought and emotion to be conveyed than the following? —

"The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth."

Mr. Theodore Watts brings an impeachment against the *Ode*, — "the sole impeachment of it," he says, — on the ground that "the length of the lines and the arrangement of the rhymes are not always inevitable;"[1] but though this may be true of a few of the lines, it certainly is not true of the poem as a whole. On the contrary, from beginning to end, the lines, with their varying length and exquisitely modulated harmony, seem to adapt themselves perfectly to the subtlest change in the poet's mood. In the following lines, for instance, is there not the deepest "emotional necessity" for every metrical arrangement the poet has made? —

"Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong."

[1] See his article on "Poetry," in the *Ency. Brit.*, Vol. XIX.

In short, as far as mere technique goes, the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality* is as nearly perfect as anything else of the same compass to be found in English poetry. If we are to look for flaws anywhere, we must look for them in the thought, in the philosophy of life upon which the poem is founded. And here, it must be admitted, the *Ode* is not wholly without fault. The assertion that "our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting," which forms, as it were, the very groundwork of the poem, cannot, unfortunately, be accepted in the literal sense as a truth; and this to a certain extent mars the effect of the poem: a pretty conceit may strike our fancy, but it takes the truth, or what we believe to be the truth, to move us deeply. However, if we are content to interpret Wordsworth's words somewhat vaguely, to regard them as a mere poetic exaggeration of the truth that there is a something in us which transcends experience, — a something which is not of this world, yet which enables us to understand the things of this world, — we may justly look upon the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality* not merely as the greatest, but — to use Professor Saintsbury's phrase — "the one really, dazzlingly, supremely great thing he ever did."[1]

The wonderful harmonies of the great *Ode* are echoed — faintly, to be sure, but still with the unmistakable hand of the master — in the *Ode composed on an Evening of Extraordinary Splendour*, one of the last bits of really good work that Wordsworth produced. From the date of the *Evening Walk* to that of the *Ode on the Installation of Prince Albert as Chancellor of the University of Cambridge*, it is a period of about sixty years, — a long period for poetic activity to continue in the case of any poet; but virtually all his best work was produced comparatively early in this period. After *Laodamia* and *Dion*, the vigor, freshness, and spontaneity characteristic of his early work are gone; and "what is chiefly visible is," as Myers says, "the slow stiffening of the imaginative power, the slow withdrawal of the insight into the soul of things."[2] In a sonnet or two, — such as *Inside King's College Chapel, Cambridge*, and *The Trosachs*, — he flashes out again in the best style of his early

[1] *History of Nineteenth-Century Literature*, p. 54.
[2] See his *William Wordsworth*, p. 116 (New York).

years; but the fire rekindled gleams for a moment or so only, and then is gone; the rest is darkness.

In estimating the worth of Wordsworth's poetic achievement, therefore, one has practically to confine one's self to the work of his earlier period, and particularly to the shorter poems of that period. By far the greater number of the poems produced after, let us say, 1814 might better have been left unwritten, so far as any material advantage to his fame is concerned. Indeed, the sad fact which all comprehensive criticism of Wordsworth must take account of is that, wherever in his poetry one turns, one is almost sure to find something that one heartily wishes away. This is why Wordsworth has been condemned to a much lower rank among poets than that which his great and real merits would seem to entitle him to. He is acknowledged to be a great poet, — for the poet who has movingly expressed such a number of profound truths as are to be found in his poetry can scarcely be denied the title "great"; but he is not yet acknowledged to be a classic; and the reason would seem to be that which we have just given, namely, the distressing unevenness of his work. As Matthew Arnold says, "to be possible and receivable as a classic, Wordsworth needs to be relieved of a great deal of the poetical baggage which now encumbers him."[1]

The truth is, as many critics have pointed out, he wrote too much always to write well. He was almost wholly lacking in self-restraint: he was but too apt to utter everything that came into his mind, the trivial as well as the important. Whatever seemed noteworthy to him at any time must, he thought, be of consequence to all men for all time. There is nothing of petty vanity about him, indeed; but there is a solemn self-complacency and egotism, which is, it must be confessed, often a little trying. He was quite wanting in that fine sense of proportion which sees all men and all things in their proper perspective. He could not always separate the relevant from the irrelevant, the good from the bad. He had, in short, no sense of humor. His temperament was preëminently serious. Notwithstanding his cheerful optimism, he could see the tragic side of life very clearly, as clearly perhaps as any other

[1] *Essays in Criticism*, Second Series, p. 136 (1889).

English poet, save Shakespeare; but he could not see the comic side at all. The world of comedy was to him a *terra incognita.* He never ventured into it; and if he had done so, he would have been at a loss how to conduct himself. Hence arises his limitations as a creator of character. Life is many-sided; and he who sees but one side only must necessarily fail to give a true view of it in any complete presentation of it he may attempt. Wordsworth, it must be admitted, lacked the power of entering into complete and living sympathy with all the conflicting moods and passions which go to make up that wonderfully complex thing, — a human character. His characters are, therefore, for the most part simple ones, and when examined closely are found to bear a very great likeness to himself. He had not the power of giving separate and independent life to a great variety of characters; he could not make them speak and act as if they had minds and wills of their own.

It would be ungracious, however, to dwell any longer on his limitations. What poet, for that matter, is without his limitations? The better part, surely, is to make the most of his merits. And in Wordsworth's case, these are neither few nor unimportant. If he has not treated man with anything like the comprehensive understanding exhibited by Shakespeare or by Chaucer, he has yet dealt with him in a manner both new and enlightening. He has given us glimpses of the heart of man in its native and natural simplicity which no other poet has given us; and as for all that concerns the relation of the human heart to the inmost heart of nature, to the life of things, it is not too much to say that Wordsworth is the one poet to whom all English readers would at once turn. Here he is altogether and entirely unrivalled.

V

HIS PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

We sometimes hear it said that the poet has no business meddling with philosophy or religion; that his office is simply to sing, to give utterance to particular moods and feelings; and that the worth of his poetry has nothing whatever to do with its morality, nor even with its meaning. Those who think thus seem strangely forgetful of the fact that many among the world's greatest poets — writers whom it would be impossible to exclude from the category of poets — are conspicuous for the strong moral and religious tone of their works. Are not Dante and Milton, for instance, poets? And do they not teach us? Do they not even preach to us at times?

The truth is that the poet is thinker as well as singer. In all poetry there must be a thread of thought; and, other things being equal, the better the thought, the better the poetry. Moreover, if the poet is to represent life, or even a part of life only, he must adopt, at least for the time being, a more or less definite attitude toward that which he seeks to represent; for the representation of a thing necessitates a point of view from which to represent it. In short, the poet must have some kind of a philosophy of life on which to base his poetry, or it will have neither meaning nor value. His representation of life may be inadequate, superficial, even fanciful, and still have its value; but in all cases it must make some appeal to the intellect, and in no case will its appeal be permanently effective, if it ignores those great and fundamental truths which most vitally concern life, — the truths of morality and of religion.

It is, indeed, inevitable that this should be so. The poet, the preacher, and the philosopher, all, as Mr. Leslie Stephen says, "live in the same world, and are interested in the same truths."[1] Each deals, or *may* deal, with the same problems, though each, of course, deals with them in a different way. If

[1] *Hours in a Library*, III, 178.

the poet asks himself "What is the meaning of life?" or "What is the right way to live?" he asks the question, not that he may satisfy his intellect merely, but his emotional being also; and in all that he utters in answer to it he must endeavor to convey a suggestion of the feeling it has excited within his own being. Poetry is thus thought suffused or charged with emotion, — thought on the True, the Beautiful, or the Good expressed in such a way as to stimulate emotion, yet leave the will untouched. From one point of view, therefore, it is a kind of philosophy, — a philosophy which makes its appeal to man's nature as a whole, and not to one side only, as is the case with abstract philosophy. "Its object," as Wordsworth says, "is truth; . . . not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony, which gives competence and confidence to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal."[1] From another point of view, again, it is a kind of religion, — a religion "without practical efficacy and without metaphysical illusion."[2] Originally, indeed, it was indistinguishable from religion; for, as Jowett has remarked, "the poet and the prophet, or preacher, in primitive antiquity are one and the same."[3]

It is impossible, therefore, utterly to divorce poetry from either philosophy or religion, as some would have us do. Any attempt to do so would inevitably lead to a narrowing of its scope, and would end in degrading it to the position of a mere pastime devoid of any serious intent. Such a degradation of the poetic art would surely be deplorable. This, at any rate, was Wordsworth's opinion. His eminently serious temperament admitted of no light or unworthy conception of his art. The office of poet was in his eyes a high and noble one, — one that should not be prostituted to the low purpose of giving amusement for mere amusement's sake. He wished above all things to be regarded as a teacher. Hence his comparatively infrequent use of pure fiction. Not that he had any objection to fiction, as such, provided it was "true and consistent in spirit"; but rather that he believed he could move and instruct

[1] *Prose Works*, I, 59–60.

[2] Professor Santayana, *Poetry and Religion*, p. 289.

[3] Introduction to the *Gorgias* (*Plato's Dialogues*, II, 313; 1892).

his hearers or readers more readily by adhering to simple, commonplace fact. By pointing out the hidden meaning underlying simple fact, he hoped to show that there is "a tale in everything" from which one and all may draw the deepest lessons of moral and spiritual truth. His poetry, therefore, is at once philosophical and religious, and designedly so. His most ambitious work, *The Excursion*, is avowedly a philosophical poem; and the great body of his poetry is founded upon an ethical system as definite and as capable of clear exposition, almost, as that of an avowed moralist. He very properly, of course, disclaims any intention "formally to announce a system": his art makes it impossible for him to do that, for the logical demonstration of truth is no part of the business of the poet. At the same time, he makes it perfectly clear that he has a system of philosophy, that he has a definite and consistent way of looking at things; but he contents himself with aiming to convey to the mind such "clear thoughts, lively images, and strong feelings" that "the reader will have no difficulty in extracting the system for himself."

It is not our purpose here to "extract" this system in its completeness: that would take us beyond the limits of the space at our disposal, and would, perhaps, be scarcely worth while. It will suffice if we outline the most salient features of the system.

In the popular mind, Wordsworth figures largely as a sort of priest of a peculiar, semi-mystical nature-worship; and his attitude toward nature does, indeed, afford some basis for this conception. Wordsworth's views with regard to nature and the relations subsisting between nature and man are, to a certain extent, peculiar. Most poets who have sung the praises of nature, and especially those who preceded him, treated her rather as a background intended to give relief to the life and activity portrayed thereon than as having any interest in and for herself. Not so with Wordsworth. Man is, indeed, as we have shown,[1] the chief object of his interest; but his love of man does not exclude a love of nature for her own sake. Nature is for him an object of love and reverence wholly apart from man. This love of nature, however, is not, as some sup-

[1] See p. lvii.

pose, a species of nature-worship. Wordsworth does not make a divinity out of nature; rather, he sees divinity in nature, — a divinity, moreover, that is constantly impressing itself upon and influencing man in his every thought and act. The mountain echo, the roaring of the storm, the murmur of the brook, — all are voices of God, voices which to his "inward ear" have a distinct and intelligible meaning. In nature, inanimate as well as animate, he feels "a presence," —

> "A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things." [1]

At times, indeed, he speaks of nature as possessing the attributes of personality; that is, as having moods and passions of her own like those of men. And these moods and passions are not, apparently, mere projections of his own subjective emotions; they are not his own feelings reflected as in a glass, but feelings like his own, — feelings which appeal to his own emotional being in a way which seems to preclude all doubt as to their external existence: —

> "'Tis my faith that every flower
> Enjoys the air it breathes." [2]

For the most part, however, he is content to regard these emotions or to speak more exactly, this capacity to excite emotion which he recognizes in nature, not as evidence of personality in nature, but rather as an indication of the immanence of God in all things. The voices of nature blended together make up a harmony incomparably more subtle and more grand than any that could proceed from the hand of man, — a harmony that can and must proceed from the hand of none other than an all-perfect Musician. Ordinarily we pay but little attention to this harmony, so taken up are we with the dull, practical affairs of life; but none the less it is there. At times, indeed, it bursts upon us with such impressiveness that even the least sensitive cannot choose but feel it and be moved by it. In moments such as these the conviction forces itself upon us that we are in the presence of a personality as distinct as our own: —

[1] *Tintern Abbey*, ll. 100–102.
[2] *Lines written in Early Spring*, ll. 11–12.

> "The power which all
> Acknowledge when thus moved, which Nature thus
> To bodily sense exhibits, is the express
> Resemblance of that glorious faculty
> That higher minds bear with them as their own."[1]

With Wordsworth, therefore, God is not a Creator sitting apart from his creation, — a mere spectator in the universe, as the deists of the eighteenth century were fond of picturing Him, — but a Being immanent in all things. And yet this immanence of God in all things is not such as to identify Him with the universe. God, man, and external nature are, in Wordsworth's view, three separate and distinct entities. Wordsworth is no pantheist. His agreement with pantheism, which some critics have emphasized unduly, is apparent rather than real. Pantheism, in whatever form it may assume, necessarily involves the "denial of a distinction between God and the world."[2] The pantheist must either identify the universe with God, or regard all things finite simply as manifestations of the Deity. In either case, man's individuality is extinguished, and with it, of course, free-will, right and wrong, and everything else that belongs to the moral world. All this, however, is totally repugnant to Wordsworth's teaching. For him, moral truth is "no mechanic structure,"[3] duty, no mere empty abstraction. On the contrary, duty is one of the great, eternal laws of the universe. Obedience to this law is the necessary condition of all moral and spiritual health. Man is, indeed, a free agent, for morality, in its essence, implies voluntary obedience; but he can be safe and happy only by treading in the path of duty. An "unchartered freedom" would prove an intolerable burden to him. Duty is the only escape from such a burden.

In thus affirming the reality of both God and the world, and in emphasizing the freedom of the will as a prerequisite of morality, Wordsworth distinctly and explicitly repudiates pantheism and all that it implies, and subscribes to a theistic creed. His theism, however, does not square at all points with the theism of orthodox Christianity. True, in his later period, the

[1] *The Prelude*, Book XIV, ll. 86–90.
[2] Andrew Seth, *Two Lectures in Theism*, p. 1.
[3] *The Excursion*, Book V, l. 563.

period of the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* and the like, his acceptance of orthodox Christianity is practically full and complete; but in his earlier period, the period of his best work, it is not so. So far was he from orthodoxy during the Quantock period of his life, that Coleridge set him down then as "a semi-atheist"[1] at least. His scepticism was probably not very profound, for it soon passed away; but it lasted long enough to leave a marked influence upon his work, which in many points runs contrary to the teachings of Christianity. It would seem as if he were disinclined to accept revelation as an adequate guide for the upbuilding of the moral and spiritual nature. He professed full belief in God, duty, and a life hereafter; but he held that the ultimate sanction for such a belief is to be sought, not in the will of God as revealed miraculously in certain writings, but as revealed in nature and in the human heart itself. In appealing to conscience as

> "God's most intimate presence in the soul,
> And his most perfect image in the world,"[2]

he is, of course, at one with orthodox Christianity; but in speaking of nature as a better teacher than either sage or prophet, he is distinctly unorthodox.

As to his ideas about the value of nature as an educative force, he derived them in the main from Rousseau, though he modified Rousseau's doctrine in many essential points. Rousseau, who believed that all things — man included — existing in their natural state are good, and that mostly all the modifications of this state introduced by man are bad, advocated in the *Émile* a system of education which should restore, as far as possible, the natural state of things, and which should therefore isolate the pupil from the corrupt and corrupting influence of society, and trust to nature chiefly for the formation of his character. He thus conceived of education "as a negative, protective process, warding off external evil, that the good native to the child may be free to unfold itself in all its spontaneity."[3] This was by no means Wordsworth's concep-

[1] *Letters* (Ed. by E. H. Coleridge), p. 164.
[2] *The Excursion*, Book IV, ll. 226–227.
[3] Thomas Davidson, *Rousseau and Education according to Nature*, p. 99.

tion of the ideal system of education, however. In his view, education should be a positive, not a negative process.

As a factor in bringing about the proper development of mind and character, he holds, with Rousseau, nature to be of the utmost importance. By the very constitution of things, it must be so. Our first impressions come from external nature; and they come to us whether we will or no: —

> "The eye — it cannot choose but see;
> We cannot bid the ear be still;
> Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
> Against or with our will." [1]

When we come into this world, we come not as aliens into a strange land where no provision has been made for our comfort and welfare, and where we can never hope to acquire the language, and so learn something of our surroundings. On the contrary, the mind is divinely endowed with the capability of acquiring truth; and nature, on her side, is in like manner endowed with the capacity to impart truth. The process of education is, as it were, the divine in us establishing relations with the divine in nature.

If it be objected that this process cannot take us very far, that nature unaided cannot furnish us with a very high order of education, Wordsworth's reply would be: True, but nature is not obliged to act alone; she has reason to assist her; and "the two powers of reason and nature, . . . reciprocally teacher and taught, may advance together in a track to which there is no limit." [2] That they may thus advance, however, there must be no injudicious meddling on the part of superior wisdom, so-called. There must be no formalities, no artifices, contrived to stand between nature and her pupil. The utmost freedom possible should be granted to the child. Not that he should be left to run wild like a young savage and never be required to look at a book or be taught a precept. By no means. Books there must be; but books and nature should go together. There should be neither artificial stimulation nor artificial restraint.

That is to say, every one should get his knowledge as far as possible for himself, and get it in the way nature intended he

[1] *Expostulation and Reply*, ll. 17–20. [2] *Prose Works*, I, 96.

should get it. Then only is it real knowledge. The true aim of education is, in Wordsworth's view, to inculcate a habit of "steady dependence upon voluntary and self-originating effort"[1] — effort directed toward a good end, of course; and such a habit is best inculcated when the student is thrown as much as possible upon his own resources from the very first. "The child is father of the man:" as the child grows, so will the man become. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that the development of the mental and moral life should continue, as it began, in a natural way. Our days should be "bound each to each by natural piety;" and the reason is that "natural piety" keeps us in closest touch with the living fountains of truth, and at the same time keeps our powers of perceiving truth in the clearest and freshest condition possible. The importance of this becomes obvious when we remember that our insight into truth has a tendency to grow duller and duller with our advance in years: —

> "Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
> Shades of the prison-house begin to close
> Upon the growing Boy,
> But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
> He sees it in his joy;
> The Youth, who daily farther from the east
> Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
> And by the vision splendid
> Is on his way attended;
> At length the Man perceives it die away,
> And fade into the light of common day."[2]

In youth, we have the power of perceiving truth, as it were, immediately; but, as we grow older, this power more and more deserts us. Our horizon may go on ever widening, but with the widening of our horizon comes inevitably a corresponding indistinctness of vision.

As to the truth or falsity of this theory from the point of view of psychology, it is needless to say much. Suffice it to say that modern psychology is not entirely in accord with Wordsworth. It agrees with him, indeed, in recognizing the fact that between the child and the man there is, in many respects, a very marked difference; but it is scarcely inclined to

[1] *Prose Works*, I, 92. [2] *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*, ll. 66–76.

agree with him in regarding that difference as due to a keener perception of truth in the child than in the man.

How came Wordsworth to adopt such a theory? A remark which the Wanderer makes will, perhaps, help us to see how it was: —

> "Ah! why in age
> Do we revert so fondly to the walks
> Of childhood — but that there the Soul discerns
> The dear memorial footsteps unimpaired
> Of her own native vigour?" [1]

Wordsworth's delight, as a child, in the beauty of the external world about him had been very keen, and his perceptions of things of extraordinary clearness and vividness. Indeed, so vividly had the images of things been impressed upon his mind at times that he would often lose consciousness of the fact that they were images, and be on the point of falling into the acceptance of a kind of idealism, in which the things of sense would seem to lose their objective character and become wholly subjective. He had escaped this "abyss of idealism," as he calls it; but the memory of what had almost plunged him into it remained strong within him. And when, later in life, he came to reflect, under the influence of the Rousseauite theories of education, upon the process by which knowledge is acquired, and upon the influence of environment on that process, it seemed to him that the vividness of his own early perceptions had been due, in a large measure at least, to his intimacy with, and delight in, nature. He had seen clearly because he had lived in a natural environment, and had taken pleasure in the world about him. And what had been true in his case is, he thought, true generally. The child, he declares, has a keener vision, a quicker grasp upon fact than the man; and the reason is that the child, as a rule, lives in more intimate relations with nature than the man: —

> "Youth maintains,
> In all conditions of society,
> Communion more direct and intimate
> With Nature, — hence, ofttimes, with reason too —
> Than age or manhood, even." [2]

[1] *The Excursion*, Book IX, ll. 36–40.
[2] *The Prelude*, Book XI, ll. 27–31.

The man no longer takes the same pleasure in nature which he took as a child; he has become neglectful, or preoccupied with the ordinary cares of life; and in consequence he suffers a greater or less atrophy of his spiritual eyesight. The nearer to nature he lives, however, the clearer will he see, and the longer will his spiritual eyesight remain undimmed. Hence it is that virtue, goodness, and truth are more commonly found among those who live a life of rural simplicity than among those who live the more conventional life of the city.

If this were true, the conclusion would seem to follow that men ought everywhere to abandon the city and betake themselves to the country. But Wordsworth drew no such conclusion as this; nor did he intend that it should be drawn. It is true, he says, that rural life and solitude

> "favour most,
> Most frequently call forth, and best sustain,"[1]

the simple, primal virtues, — those pure sensations of the heart which lie at the roots of the noblest and best types of character; but it by no means follows that every one should lead the life of a hermit. Man, on the contrary, is essentially a social being. Humanity is a unit, and the individual cannot, therefore, safely cut himself off from all intercourse with his fellows. Again, it may, perhaps, be true that they

> "err least, the lowly class
> Whom a benign necessity compels
> To follow reason's least ambitious course;"[2]

but then the explanation partly is that their course is unambitious. Their sphere being narrow, there is the less likelihood that they should go astray in it. The happy life consists, however, not so much in not going astray, as in not yielding to the temptation to go astray. He who is

> "More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
> As tempted more; more able to endure,
> As more exposed to suffering and distress,"[3]

[1] *The Excursion*, Book IV, ll. 366–367.
[2] *Ibid.* Book V, ll. 593–595.
[3] *Character of the Happy Warrior*, ll. 23–25.

he it is who is the Happy Warrior, the man whom we should all wish to resemble.

There is doubtless a little inconsistency in Wordsworth's position here; but the inconsistency is not surprising: it is merely another example of his reactionary zeal getting the better of his discretion. He wished to point out to a somewhat hardened and unbelieving generation the impossibility of a healthy life for man apart from nature, and he laid emphasis on the bond connecting the one with the other. The universe is made up of God, nature, and man; and man — the least and most insignificant part — must not think that he can live unto himself alone. If he tries to do so, he dies. There is that in him which reaches out beyond himself and demands satisfaction. Between him and nature there is a bond which cannot be ignored, or at least ignored with impunity. It was against the danger of ignoring this bond that Wordsworth preached, in season and out of season; and if at times he used language rather more forcible than was necessary, we can, perhaps, find an excuse for him in the fact that to him the danger seemed a very real one. His age, or so it appeared to him, was given over to conventionality, to indifference toward those things which are of vital import, and to complacent satisfaction with itself and with its own works; and what it needed was to be brought to a realizing sense of the paltriness of its aims and the meanness of its works.

In preaching a "return to nature" as a cure for the evils of his age, Wordsworth, however, had no "golden fancies of a golden age" which had existed some time or other in the remote past, and which ought somehow or other to be revived. The Solitary, who had had illusions on that score, and had sought for a paradise in the wilds of America wherein he might find that "pure archetype of human greatness," — original, uncorrupted man, — had been quickly disenchanted. Human nature is everywhere and always pretty much the same. There never was, of course, a golden age; and it is both useless and needless to seek for one. The world we live in is the world we must be content with; and a very good world it is, if we view it aright. How to view it aright, and so get the clew to a healthy moral life, — that, indeed, is the question. To those

who ask this question, Wordsworth would reply: First put yourselves into sympathetic relations with nature, as you were when a child; then follow her teaching as it shall be revealed unto you by both your reason and your feeling, — that is, by your whole being.

The objection commonly urged against this advice is that the teaching of nature is apt to be somewhat ambiguous. "How are we to know," asks one objector, "which natural forces make for us and which against us?" How are we to know, might come the rejoinder, what food is good for us and what harmful? We must first of all have faith that there is some kind of food that is good for us, and in the next place find out by experience what that kind is. If we begin by refusing to believe in the existence of food, and look upon nature as a great monster standing ready to devour us, we shall certainly come to grief. We must believe that nature, or if we choose to put it so, that God in nature, means us well. If this benevolence is not always apparent to us, it is because we cannot view things aright. Could we see the universe from the point of view of Omniscience, we should see that central peace and love subsist at the heart of things. The limitations of our finite minds forbid us, of course, from taking this view; but we must regard it as the only rational view of the universe to take. We may not believe that this is the best of all possible worlds, but we must believe that it is a world in which the main principle is benevolent, and in which there is for us an attainable good. If we do not believe this, if we do not believe in a possible good and seek to attain it, morality, nay, life itself, becomes impossible: —

> "We live by hope
> And by desire; we see by the glad light
> And breathe the sweet air of futurity;
> And so we live, or else we have no life."[1]

[1] *The Excursion*, Book IX, ll. 23–26.

NOTE. — The text followed in this volume of selections is that finally adopted by Wordsworth in the edition of his poetical works published in 1849–50. In spelling, however, and for the most part in punctuation also, the editor has followed Mr. Thomas Hutchinson's one-volume "Oxford Wordsworth." The notes on the chronology of the poems also are based on those given in the "Oxford Wordsworth."

In the matter of arrangement, the editor has made an effort to classify the poems according to their natural and obvious affinities. Whatever be the merits or demerits of Wordsworth's own arrangement of his poems, — and critical opinion seems inclined to regard its demerits as greater than its merits, — it was clearly out of the question to adhere to that arrangement in a volume of selections such as the present. The classification here given is a modification of that given by Matthew Arnold in his volume of selections from Wordsworth's poems. If it be found practically useful, the editor will forego making for it any claim to strict, scientific accuracy.

The editor wishes to acknowledge his obligations to previous workers in the same field, and in particular to Professor Knight, Professor Dowden, and Mr. Thomas Hutchinson.

A SELECTION OF THE SHORTER POEMS OF WORDSWORTH

SELECTIONS OF THE POEMS OF WORDSWORTH

I. LYRICAL POEMS

1. POEMS IN BALLAD FORM AND THE LIKE

THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN°

At the corner of Wood Street,° when daylight appears,
Hangs a Thrush that sings loud, it has sung for three years:
Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the Bird.

'Tis a note of enchantment; what ails her? She sees
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees;
Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury° glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,
Down which she so often has tripped with her pail;
And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The only one dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven: but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade:
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colours have all passed away from her eyes!

WE ARE SEVEN

—A SIMPLE Child,°
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage Girl:
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad:
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
—Her beauty made me glad.

"Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
How many may you be?"
"How many? Seven in all," she said,
And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they? I pray you tell."
She answered, "Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

"Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven! I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be."

Then did the little Maid reply,
"Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree."

"You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church-yard laid,
Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be seen,"
The little Maid replied,
"Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
And they are side by side.

"My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

"And often after sunset, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

"The first that died was sister Jane;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.

"So in the church-yard she was laid;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

"And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side."

"How many are you, then," said I,
"If they two are in heaven?"
Quick was the little Maid's reply,
"O Master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!"
'Twas throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING°

I HEARD a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure: —
But the least motion which they made,
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY°

"Why, William, on that old gray stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?

"Where are your books? — that light bequeathed
To Beings else forlorn and blind!
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

"You look round on your Mother Earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!"

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,°
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew° spake,
And thus I made reply:

"The eye — it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
Against or with our will.

"Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

"— Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away."

THE TABLES TURNED°

AN EVENING SCENE ON THE SAME SUBJECT

Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books;
Or surely you'll grow double:
Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain's head,
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books!° 'tis a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your Teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse° from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

STRANGE fits of passion have I known:°
And I will dare to tell,
But in the Lover's ear alone,
What once to me befell.

When she I loved looked every day
Fresh as a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath an evening-moon.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye,
All over the wide lea;
With quickening pace my horse drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard-plot;
  And, as we climbed the hill,
The sinking moon to Lucy's cot
  Came near, and nearer still.

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
  Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And all the while my eyes I kept
  On the descending moon.

My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
  He raised, and never stopped:
When down behind the cottage roof,
  At once, the bright moon dropped.

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
  Into a Lover's head!
"O mercy!" to myself I cried,
  "If Lucy should be dead!"

She dwelt among the untrodden ways°
  Beside the springs of Dove,°
A Maid whom there were none to praise
  And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
  Half hidden from the eye!
—Fair as a star, when only one
  Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
  When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
  The difference to me!

I TRAVELLED among unknown men,°
In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream!
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed,
The bowers where Lucy played;
And thine too is the last green field
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,°
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This Child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn,
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake — the work was done —
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal;°
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

A POET'S EPITAPH°

ART thou a Statist in the van
Of public conflicts trained and bred?
—First learn to love one living man;
Then may'st thou think upon the dead.

A Lawyer art thou? — draw not nigh!
Go, carry to some fitter place
The keenness of that practised eye,
The hardness of that sallow face.

Art thou a Man of purple cheer?
A rosy Man, right plump to see?
Approach; yet, Doctor,° not too near,
This grave no cushion is for thee.

Or art thou one of gallant pride,
A Soldier and no man of chaff?
Welcome!—but lay thy sword aside,
And lean upon a peasant's staff.

Physician art thou? one, all eyes,
Philosopher! — a fingering slave,
One that would° peep and botanize
Upon his mother's grave?

Wrapt closely in thy sensual fleece,
O turn aside, — and take, I pray,
That he below may rest in peace,
Thy ever-dwindling soul, away!

A Moralist perchance appears;
Led, Heaven knows how! to this poor sod:
And he has neither eyes nor ears;
Himself his world, and his own God;

One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling
Nor form, nor feeling, great or small;
A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,
An intellectual All-in-all!

Shut close the door; press down the latch;
Sleep in thy intellectual crust;
Nor lose ten tickings of thy watch
Near this unprofitable dust.

But who is He, with modest looks,
And clad in homely russet brown?
He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.

He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noon-day grove;
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.

The outward shows of sky and earth,
Of hill and valley, he has viewed;
And impulses of deeper birth
Have come to him in solitude.

In common things that round us lie
Some random truths he can impart, —
The harvest of a quiet eye
That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

But he is weak; both Man and Boy,
Hath been an idler in the land;
Contented if he might enjoy
The things which others understand.

— Come hither in thy hour of strength;
Come, weak as is a breaking wave!
Here stretch thy body at full length;
Or build thy house upon this grave.

MATTHEW°

In the School of —— is a tablet, on which are inscribed, in gilt letters, the Names of the several persons who have been Schoolmasters there since the foundation of the School, with the time at which they entered upon and quitted their office. Opposite to one of those names the Author wrote the following lines.

If Nature, for a favourite child,
In thee hath tempered so her clay,
That every hour thy heart runs wild,
Yet never once doth go astray,

Read o'er these lines; and then review
This tablet, that thus humbly rears
In such diversity of hue
Its history of two hundred years.

— When through this little wreck of fame,
Cipher and syllable! thine eye
Has travelled down to Matthew's name,
Pause with no common sympathy.

And, if a sleeping tear should wake,
Then be it neither checked nor stayed:
For Matthew a request I make
Which for himself he had not made.

Poor Matthew, all his frolics o'er,
Is silent as a standing pool;
Far from the chimney's merry roar,
And murmur of the village school.

The sighs which Matthew heaved were sighs
Of one tired out with fun and madness;
The tears which came to Matthew's eyes
Were tears of light, the dew of gladness.

Yet, sometimes, when the secret cup
Of still and serious thought went round,
It seemed as if he drank it up —
He felt with spirit so profound.

— Thou soul of God's best earthly mould!
Thou happy Soul! and can it be
That these two words of glittering gold
Are all that must remain of thee?

THE TWO APRIL MORNINGS°

We walked along, while bright and red
Uprose the morning sun;
And Matthew stopped, he looked, and said,
"The will of God be done!"

A village schoolmaster was he,
With hair of glittering grey;
As blithe a man as you could see
On a spring holiday.

And on that morning, through the grass,
And by the steaming rills,
We travelled merrily, to pass
A day among the hills.

"Our work," said I, "was well begun,
Then, from thy breast what thought,
Beneath so beautiful a sun,
So sad a sigh has brought?"

A second time did Matthew stop;
And fixing still his eye
Upon the eastern mountain-top,
To me he made reply:

"Yon cloud with that long purple cleft
Brings fresh into my mind
A day like this which I have left
Full thirty years behind.

"And just above yon slope of corn
Such colours, and no other,
Were in the sky, that April morn,
Of this the very brother.

"With rod and line I sued the sport
Which that sweet season gave,
And, to the church-yard come, stopped short
Beside my daughter's grave.

"Nine summers had she scarcely seen,
The pride of all the vale;
And then she sang;—she would have been
A very nightingale.

"Six feet in earth my Emma lay;
And yet I loved her more,
For so it seemed, than till that day
I e'er had loved before.

"And, turning from her grave, I met,
Beside the church-yard yew,
A blooming Girl, whose hair was wet
With points of morning dew.

"A basket on her head she bare;
Her brow was smooth and white:
To see a child so very fair,
It was a pure delight!

"No fountain from its rocky cave
E'er tripped with foot so free;
She seemed as happy as a wave
That dances on the sea.

"There came from me a sigh of pain
Which I could ill confine;
I looked at her, and looked again:
And did not wish her mine!"

Matthew is in his grave, yet now,
Methinks, I see him stand,
As at that moment, with a bough
Of wilding in his hand.

THE FOUNTAIN°

A CONVERSATION

We talked with open heart, and tongue
Affectionate and true,
A pair of friends, though I was young,
And Matthew seventy-two.

We lay beneath a spreading oak,
Beside a mossy seat;
And from the turf a fountain broke,
And gurgled at our feet.

"Now, Matthew!" said I, "let us match
This water's pleasant tune
With some old border-song, or catch
That suits a summer's noon;

"Or of the church-clock and the chimes
Sing here beneath the shade,
That half-mad thing of witty rhymes
Which you last April made!"

In silence Matthew lay, and eyed
The spring beneath the tree;
And thus the dear old Man replied,
The grey-haired man of glee:

"No check, no stay, this Streamlet fears;
How merrily it goes!
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

"And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot choose but think
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay
Beside this fountain's brink.

"My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirred,
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

"Thus fares it still in our decay:
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

"The blackbird amid leafy trees,
The lark above the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will.

"With Nature never do *they* wage
A foolish strife; they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free:

"But we are pressed by heavy laws;
And often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

"If there be one who need bemoan
His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his own;
It is the man of mirth.

"My days, my Friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approved,
And many love me; but by none
Am I enough beloved."

"Now both himself and me he wrongs,
The man who thus complains!
I live and sing my idle songs
Upon these happy plains;

"And, Matthew, for thy children dead
I'll be a son to thee!"
At this he grasped my hand, and said,
"Alas! that cannot be."

We rose up from the fountain-side;
And down the smooth descent
Of the green sheep-track did we glide;
And through the wood we went;

And, ere we came to Leonard's rock,
He sang those witty rhymes
About the crazy old church-clock,
And the bewildered chimes.

LUCY GRAY°;

OR, SOLITUDE

Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
— The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

"To-night will be a stormy night —
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, Child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

"That, Father! will I gladly do:
'Tis scarcely afternoon —
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon!"

At this the Father raised his hook,
And snapped a fagot-band;
He plied his work; — and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe:
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time:
She wandered up and down;
And many a hill did Lucy climb:
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

They wept — and, turning homeward, cried,
"In heaven we all shall meet;"
— When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone-wall;

And then an open field they crossed:
The marks were still the same;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank;
And further there were none!

— Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

THE SPARROW'S NEST°

Behold, within the leafy shade,
Those bright blue eggs together laid!
On me the chance-discovered sight
Gleamed like a vision of delight.
I started — seeming to espy
The home and sheltered bed,
The Sparrow's dwelling, which, hard by
My Father's house, in wet or dry
My sister Emmeline° and I
Together visited.

She looked at it and seemed to fear it;
Dreading, tho' wishing, to be near it:
Such heart was in her, being then
A little Prattler among men.
The Blessing of my later years
Was with me when a boy:
She gave me eyes, she gave me ears;
And humble cares, and delicate fears;
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears;
And love, and thought, and joy.

My heart leaps up when I behold°
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

WRITTEN IN MARCH,°

WHILE RESTING ON THE BRIDGE AT THE FOOT OF BROTHER'S WATER

THE Cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun;
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising;
There are forty feeding like one!

Like an army defeated
The snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill;
The Ploughboy is whooping — anon — anon:
There's joy in the mountains;
There's life in the fountains;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing;
The rain is over and gone!

TO A BUTTERFLY°

STAY near me — do not take thy flight!
A little longer stay in sight!
Much converse do I find in thee,
Historian of my infancy!
Float near me; do not yet depart!

Dead times revive in thee:
Thou bring'st, gay creature as thou art!
A solemn image to my heart,
My father's family!

Oh! pleasant, pleasant were the days,
The time, when, in our childish plays,
My sister Emmeline° and I
Together chased the butterfly!
A very hunter did I rush
Upon the prey: — with leaps and springs
I followed on from brake to bush;
But she, God love her, feared to brush
The dust from off its wings.

TO A BUTTERFLY°

I've watched you now a full half-hour,
Self-poised upon that yellow flower;
And, little Butterfly! indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed.
How motionless! — not frozen seas
More motionless! and then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again!

This plot of orchard-ground is ours;
My trees they are, my Sister's flowers;
Here rest your wings when they are weary;
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!
Come often to us, fear no wrong;
Sit near us on the bough!
We'll talk of sunshine and of song,
And summer days, when we were young;
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.

THE REDBREAST CHASING THE BUTTERFLY [1]

Art thou the bird whom Man loves best,
The pious bird° with the scarlet breast,
Our little English Robin;
The bird that comes about our doors
When Autumn-winds are sobbing?
Art thou the Peter of Norway Boors?
Their Thomas in Finland,
And Russia far inland?
The bird that by some name or other
All men who know thee call their brother,
The darling of children and men?
Could Father Adam [1] open his eyes
And see this sight beneath the skies,
He'd wish to close them again.
— If the Butterfly knew but his friend,
Hither his flight he would bend;
And find his way to me,
Under the branches of the tree:
In and out, he darts about;
Can this be the bird, to man so good,
That, after their bewildering,
Covered with leaves the little children,
So painfully in the wood?
What ailed thee, Robin, that thou could'st pursue
A beautiful creature,
That is gentle by nature?
Beneath the summer sky
From flower to flower let him fly;
'Tis all that he wishes to do.
The cheerer Thou of our in-door sadness,
He is the friend of our summer gladness:

[1] See *Paradise Lost*, Book XI, where Adam points out to Eve the ominous sign of the Eagle chasing "two birds of gayest plume," and the gentle Hart and Hind pursued by their enemy.

What hinders, then, that ye should be
Playmates in the sunny weather,
And fly about in the air together!
His beautiful wings in crimson are drest,
A crimson as bright as thine own:
Would'st thou be happy in thy nest,
O pious Bird! whom man loves best,
Love him, or leave him alone!

TO THE SMALL CELANDINE[1]

Pansies, lilies, kingcups, daisies,
Let them live upon their praises;
Long as there's a sun that sets,
Primroses will have their glory;
Long as there are violets,
They will have a place in story:
There's a flower that shall be mine,
'Tis the little Celandine.

Eyes of some men travel far
For the finding of a star;
Up and down the heavens they go,
Men that keep a mighty rout!
I'm as great as they, I trow,
Since the day I found thee out,
Little Flower! — I'll make a stir,
Like a sage astronomer.

Modest, yet withal an Elf
Bold, and lavish of thyself;
Since we needs must first have met
I have seen thee, high and low,
Thirty years or more, and yet
'Twas a face I did not know;
Thou hast now, go where I may,
Fifty greetings in a day.

[1] Common Pilewort.

Ere a leaf is on a bush,
In the time before the thrush
Has a thought about her nest,
Thou wilt come with half a call,
Spreading out thy glossy breast
Like a careless Prodigal;
Telling tales about the sun,
When we've little warmth, or none.

Poets, vain men in their mood!
Travel with the multitude:
Never heed them; I aver
That they all are wanton wooers;
But the thrifty cottager,
Who stirs little out of doors,
Joys to spy thee near her home;
Spring is coming, Thou art come!

Comfort have thou of thy merit,
Kindly, unassuming Spirit!
Careless of thy neighbourhood,
Thou dost show thy pleasant face
On the moor, and in the wood,
In the lane; — there's not a place,
Howsoever mean it be,
But 'tis good enough for thee.

Ill befall the yellow flowers,
Children of the flaring hours!
Buttercups, that will be seen,
Whether we will see or no;
Others, too, of lofty mien;
They have done as worldlings do,
Taken praise that should be thine,
Little, humble Celandine!

Prophet of delight and mirth,
Ill-requited upon earth;

Herald of a mighty band,
Of a joyous train ensuing,
Serving at my heart's command,
Tasks that are no tasks renewing,
I will sing, as doth behove,
Hymns in praise of what I love!

THE SMALL CELANDINE°

THERE is a Flower, the lesser Celandine,
That shrinks, like many more, from cold and rain;
And, the first moment that the sun may shine,
Bright as the sun himself, 'tis out again!

When hailstones have been falling, swarm on swarm,
Or blasts the green field and the trees distrest,
Oft have I seen it muffled up from harm,
In close self-shelter like a Thing at rest.

But lately, one rough day, this Flower I passed
And recognised it, though an altered form,
Now standing forth an offering to the blast,
And buffeted at will by rain and storm.

I stopped, and said with inly-muttered voice,
"It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold:
This neither is its courage nor its choice,
But its necessity in being old.

"The sunshine may not cheer it, nor the dew;
It cannot help itself in its decay;
Stiff in its members, withered, changed of hue."
And, in my spleen, I smiled that it was grey.

To be a Prodigal's Favourite — then, worse truth,
A Miser's Pensioner — behold our lot!
O Man, that from thy fair and shining youth
Age might but take the things Youth needed not!

TO THE DAISY°

"Her°[1] divine skill taught me this,
That from everything I saw
I could some instruction draw,
And raise pleasure to the height
Through the meanest object's sight.
By the murmur of a spring,
Or the least bough's rustelling;
By a Daisy whose leaves spread
Shut when Titan goes to bed;
Or a shady bush or tree;
She could more infuse in me
Than all Nature's beauties can
In some other wiser man."

G. WITHER.

In youth from rock to rock I went,
From hill to hill in discontent
Of pleasure high and turbulent,
Most pleased when most uneasy;
But now my own delights I make,—
My thirst at every rill can slake,
And gladly Nature's love partake,
Of Thee, sweet Daisy!

Thee Winter in the garland wears
That thinly decks his few grey hairs;
Spring parts the clouds with softest airs,
That she may sun thee;
Whole Summer-fields are thine by right;
And Autumn, melancholy Wight!
Doth in thy crimson head delight
When rains are on thee.

In shoals and bands, a morrice train,°
Thou greet'st the traveller in the lane;
Pleased at his greeting thee again;
Yet nothing daunted,

[1] His muse.

Nor grieved if thou be set at nought:
And oft alone in nooks remote
We meet thee, like a pleasant thought,
When such are wanted.

Be violets in their secret mews°
The flowers the wanton Zephyrs choose;
Proud be the rose, with rains and dews
Her head impearling,
Thou liv'st with less ambitious aim,
Yet hast not gone without thy fame;
Thou art indeed by many a claim
The Poet's darling.

If to a rock from rains he fly,
Or, some bright day of April sky,
Imprisoned by hot sunshine lie
Near the green holly,
And wearily at length should fare;
He needs but look about, and there
Thou art! — a friend at hand, to scare
His melancholy.

A hundred times, by rock or bower,
Ere thus I have lain couched an hour,
Have I derived from thy sweet power
Some apprehension;
Some steady love; some brief delight;
Some memory that had taken flight;
Some chime of fancy wrong or right;
Or stray invention.

If stately passions in me burn,
And one chance look to Thee should turn,
I drink out of an humbler urn
A lowlier pleasure;
The homely sympathy that heeds
The common life, our nature breeds;
A wisdom fitted to the needs
Of hearts at leisure.

Fresh-smitten by the morning ray,
When thou art up, alert and gay,
Then, cheerful Flower! my spirits play
With kindred gladness:
And when, at dusk, by dews opprest
Thou sink'st, the image of thy rest
Hath often eased my pensive breast
Of careful sadness.

And all day long I number yet,
All seasons through, another debt,
Which I, wherever thou art met,
To thee am owing;
An instinct call it, a blind sense;
A happy, genial influence,
Coming one knows not how, nor whence,
Nor whither going.

Child of the Year! that round dost run
Thy pleasant course,—when day's begun
As ready to salute the sun
As lark or leveret,°
Thy long-lost praise thou shalt regain;
Nor be less dear to future men
Than in old time;—thou not in vain
Art Nature's favourite.[1]

TO THE SAME FLOWER°

With little here to do or see
Of things that in the great world be,
Daisy! again I talk to thee,
For thou art worthy,
Thou unassuming Common-place
Of Nature, with that homely face,
And yet with something of a grace,
Which Love makes for thee!

[1] See, in Chaucer and the elder Poets, the honours formerly paid to this flower.

Oft on the dappled turf at ease
I sit, and play with similes,
Loose types of things through all degrees,
Thoughts of thy raising:
And many a fond and idle name
I give to thee, for praise or blame,
As is the humour of the game,
While I am gazing.

A nun demure of lowly port;
Or sprightly maiden, of Love's court,
In thy simplicity the sport
Of all temptations;
A queen in crown of rubies drest;
A starveling in a scanty vest;
Are all, as seems to suit thee best,
Thy appellations.

A little Cyclops, with one eye
Staring to threaten and defy,
That thought comes next — and instantly
The freak is over,
The shape will vanish — and behold
A silver shield with boss of gold,
That spreads itself, some faery bold
In fight to cover!

I see thee glittering from afar —
And then thou art a pretty star;
Not quite so fair as many are
In heaven above thee!
Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest; —
May peace come never to his nest,
Who shall reprove thee!

Bright *Flower!* for by that name at last,
When all my reveries are past,
I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
Sweet silent creature!

That breath'st with me in sun and air,
Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
Of thy meek nature!

TO THE DAISY°

Bright Flower! whose home is everywhere,
Bold in maternal Nature's care,
And all the long year through the heir
Of joy or sorrow;
Methinks that there abides in thee
Some concord with humanity,
Given to no other flower I see
The forest thorough!

Is it that Man is soon deprest?
A thoughtless Thing! who, once unblest,
Does little on his memory rest,
Or on his reason,
And Thou would'st teach him how to find
A shelter under every wind,
A hope for times that are unkind
And every season?

Thou wander'st the wide world about,
Unchecked by pride or scrupulous doubt,
With friends to greet thee, or without,
Yet pleased and willing;
Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,
And all things suffering from all
Thy function apostolical°
In peace fulfilling.

TO THE CUCKOO°

O BLITHE New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear,
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessèd Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for Thee!

THE GREEN LINNET

Beneath these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread
Of spring's unclouded weather,
In this sequestered nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard-seat!
And birds and flowers once more to greet,
My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest:
Hail to Thee, far above the rest
In joy of voice and pinion!
Thou, Linnet! in thy green array,
Presiding Spirit here to-day,
Dost lead the revels of the May;
And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
Art sole in thy employment:
A Life, a Presence like the Air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with any one to pair;
Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel trees,
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perched in ecstasies,
Yet seeming still to hover;

There! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
A Brother of the dancing leaves;°
Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves
Pours forth his song in gushes;
As if by that exulting strain
He mocked and treated with disdain
The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
While fluttering in the bushes.

AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS°

1803

SEVEN YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH

I SHIVER, Spirit fierce and bold,
At thought of what I now behold:
As vapours breathed from dungeons cold
Strike pleasure dead,
So sadness comes from out the mould
Where Burns is laid.

And have I then thy bones so near,
And thou forbidden to appear?
As if it were thyself that's here
I shrink with pain;
And both my wishes and my fear
Alike are vain.

Off weight — nor press on weight! — away
Dark thoughts! — they came, but not to stay;
With chastened feelings would I pay
The tribute due
To him, and aught that hides his clay
From mortal view.

Fresh as the flower, whose modest worth
He sang, his genius "glinted" forth,
Rose like a star that touching earth,
For so it seems,
Doth glorify its humble birth
With matchless beams.

The piercing eye, the thoughtful brow,
The struggling heart, where be they now?—
Full soon the Aspirant of the plough,
The prompt, the brave,
Slept, with the obscurest, in the low
And silent grave.

I mourned with thousands, but as one
More deeply grieved, for He was gone
Whose light I hailed when first it shone,
And showed my youth
How Verse may build a princely throne
On humble truth.

Alas! where'er the current tends,
Regret pursues and with it blends,
Huge Criffel's° hoary top ascends
By Skiddaw° seen,—
Neighbours we were, and loving friends
We might have been;

True friends though diversely inclined;
But heart with heart and mind with mind,
Where the main fibres are entwined,
Through Nature's skill,
May even by contraries be joined
More closely still.

The tear will start, and let it flow;
Thou "poor Inhabitant below,"°

At this dread moment — even so —
Might we together
Have sate and talked where gowans° blow,
Or on wild heather.

What treasures would have then been placed
Within my reach; of knowledge graced
By fancy what a rich repast!
But why go on? —
Oh! spare to sweep, thou mournful blast,
His grave grass-grown.

There, too, a Son, his joy and pride,
(Not three weeks past the Stripling died,)
Lies gathered to his Father's side,
Soul-moving sight!
Yet one to which is not denied
Some sad delight:

For *he* is safe, a quiet bed
Hath early found among the dead,
Harboured where none can be misled,
Wronged, or distrest;
And surely here it may be said
That such are blest.

And oh for Thee, by pitying grace
Checked oft-times in a devious race,
May He who halloweth the place
Where Man is laid
Receive thy Spirit in the embrace
For which it prayed!

Sighing I turned away; but ere
Night fell I heard, or seemed to hear,
Music that sorrow comes not near,
A ritual hymn,
Chanted in love that casts out fear
By Seraphim.

STEPPING WESTWARD°

While my Fellow-traveller and I were walking by the side of Loch Ketterine, one fine evening after sunset, in our road to a Hut where, in the course of our Tour, we had been hospitably entertained some weeks before, we met, in one of the loneliest parts of that solitary region, two well-dressed Women, one of whom said to us, by way of greeting, "What, you are stepping westward?"

"*What, you are stepping westward?*"—"*Yea.*"
—'Twould be a *wildish* destiny,
If we, who thus together roam
In a strange Land, and far from home,
Were in this place the guests of Chance:
Yet who would stop, or fear to advance,
Though home or shelter he had none,
With such a sky to lead him on?

The dewy ground was dark and cold;
Behind, all gloomy to behold;
And stepping westward seemed to be
A kind of *heavenly* destiny:
I liked the greeting; 'twas a sound
Of something without place or bound;
And seemed to give me spiritual right
To travel through that region bright.

The voice was soft, and she who spake
Was walking by her native lake:
The salutation had to me
The very sound of courtesy:
Its power was felt; and while my eye
Was fixed upon the glowing Sky,
The echo of the voice enwrought
A human sweetness with the thought
Of travelling through the world that lay
Before me in my endless way.

THE SOLITARY REAPER°

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings? —
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending; —
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

YARROW UNVISITED°

See the various Poems the scene of which is laid upon the banks of the Yarrow; in particular, the exquisite ballad of Hamilton beginning,

"Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny Bride,
Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome Marrow!—"

From Stirling castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unravelled;
Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,
And with the Tweed had travelled;
And when we came to Clovenford,°
Then said my "*winsome Marrow*,"°
"Whate'er betide, we'll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow."

"Let Yarrow folk, *frae* Selkirk town,
Who have been buying, selling,
Go back to Yarrow, 'tis their own;
Each maiden to her dwelling!
On Yarrow's banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow!
But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

"There's Galla Water,° Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us;
And Dryborough,° where with chiming Tweed
The lintwhites° sing in chorus;
There's pleasant Tiviot-dale,° a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow:
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow?

"What's Yarrow but a river bare,
That glides the dark hills under?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder."

— Strange words they seemed of slight and scorn;
My True-love sighed for sorrow;
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow!

"Oh! green," said I, "are Yarrow's holms,°
And sweet is Yarrow flowing!
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,[1]
But we will leave it growing.
O'er hilly path, and open Strath,°
We'll wander Scotland thorough;
But, though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow.

"Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow;
The swan on still St. Mary's Lake°
Float double, swan and shadow!
We will not see them; will not go,
To-day, nor yet to-morrow;
Enough if in our hearts we know
There's such a place as Yarrow.

"Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it:
We have a vision of our own;
Ah! why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We'll keep them, winsome Marrow!
For when we're there, although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow!

"If Care with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly,—
Should we be loth to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy;

[1] See Hamilton's Ballad as above.

Should life be dull, and spirits low,
'Twill soothe us in our sorrow,
That earth has something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow!"

YARROW VISITED°

SEPTEMBER, 1814

And is this — Yarrow? — *This* the Stream
Of which my fancy cherished,
So faithfully, a waking dream?
An image that hath perished!
O that some Minstrel's harp were near,
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!

Yet why? — a silvery current flows
With uncontrolled meanderings;
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed, in all my wanderings.
And, through her depths, Saint Mary's Lake
Is visibly delighted;
For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
A tender hazy brightness;
Mild dawn of promise! that excludes
All profitless dejection;
Though not unwilling here to admit
A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous Flower°
Of Yarrow Vale lay bleeding?
His bed perchance was yon smooth mound
On which the herd is feeding:
And haply from this crystal pool,
Now peaceful as the morning,
The Water-wraith° ascended thrice —
And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the Lay that sings
The haunts of happy Lovers,
The path that leads them to the grove,
The leafy grove that covers:
And Pity sanctifies the Verse
That paints, by strength of sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of love;
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow!

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation:
Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy;
The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.

That region left, the vale unfolds
Rich groves of lofty stature,
With Yarrow winding through the pomp
Of cultivated nature;
And, rising from those lofty groves,
Behold a Ruin hoary!
The shattered front of Newark's Towers,°
Renowned in Border story.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
For sportive youth to stray in;
For manhood to enjoy his strength;
And age to wear away in!
Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,
A covert for protection
Of tender thoughts, that nestle there —
The brood of chaste affection.

How sweet, on this autumnal day,
The wild-wood fruits to gather,
And on my True-love's forehead plant
A crest of blooming heather!
And what if I enwreathed my own!
'Twere no offence to reason;
The sober Hills thus deck their brows
To meet the wintry season.

I see — but not by sight alone,
Loved Yarrow, have I won thee;
A ray of fancy still survives —
Her sunshine plays upon thee!
Thy ever-youthful waters keep
A course of lively pleasure;
And gladsome notes my lips can breathe,
Accordant to the measure.

The vapours linger round the Heights,
They melt, and soon must vanish;
One hour is theirs, nor more is mine —
Sad thought, which I would banish,
But that I know, where'er I go,
Thy genuine image, Yarrow!
Will dwell with me — to heighten joy,
And cheer my mind in sorrow.

YARROW REVISITED°

The following Stanzas are a memorial of a day passed with Sir Walter Scott and other Friends visiting the Banks of the Yarrow under his guidance, immediately before his departure from Abbotsford, for Naples.

The title *Yarrow Revisited* will stand in no need of explanation for Readers acquainted with the Author's previous poems suggested by that celebrated Stream.

THE gallant Youth, who may have gained,
Or seeks, a "winsome Marrow,"
Was but an Infant in the lap
When first I looked on Yarrow;
Once more, by Newark's Castle-gate
Long left without a warder,
I stood, looked, listened, and with Thee,
Great Minstrel of the Border!

Grave thoughts ruled wide on that sweet day,
Their dignity installing
In gentle bosoms, while sere leaves
Were on the bough, or falling;
But breezes played, and sunshine gleamed —
The forest to embolden;
Reddened the fiery hues, and shot
Transparence through the golden.

For busy thoughts the Stream flowed on
In foamy agitation;
And slept in many a crystal pool
For quiet contemplation:
No public and no private care
The free-born mind enthralling,
We made a day of happy hours,
Our happy days recalling.

Brisk Youth appeared, the Morn of Youth,
With freaks of graceful folly, —
Life's temperate Noon, her sober Eve,
Her Night not melancholy;
Past, present, future, all appeared
In harmony united,
Like guests that meet, and some from far,
By cordial love invited.

And if, as Yarrow, through the woods
And down the meadow ranging,
Did meet us with unaltered face,
Though we were changed and changing;
If, *then*, some natural shadows spread
Our inward prospect over,
The soul's deep valley was not slow
Its brightness to recover.

Eternal blessings on the Muse,
And her divine employment!
The blameless Muse, who trains her Sons
For hope and calm enjoyment;
Albeit sickness, lingering yet,
Has o'er their pillow brooded;
And Care waylays their steps — a Sprite
Not easily eluded.

For thee, O SCOTT! compelled to change
Green Eildon-hill° and Cheviot
For warm Vesuvio's vine-clad slopes;
And leave thy Tweed and Tiviot
For mild Sorento's° breezy waves;
May classic Fancy, linking
With native Fancy her fresh aid,
Preserve thy heart from sinking!

Oh! while they minister to thee,
Each vying with the other,
May Health return to mellow Age
With Strength, her venturous brother;

And Tiber, and each brook and rill
  Renowned in song and story,
With unimagined beauty shine,
  Nor lose one ray of glory!

For Thou, upon a hundred streams,
  By tales of love and sorrow,
Of faithful love, undaunted truth,
  Hast shed the power of Yarrow;
And streams unknown, hills yet unseen,
  Wherever they invite Thee,
At parent Nature's grateful call,
  With gladness must requite Thee.

A gracious welcome shall be thine,
  Such looks of love and honour
As thy own Yarrow gave to me
  When first I gazed upon her;
Beheld what I had feared to see,
  Unwilling to surrender
Dreams treasured up from early days,
  The holy and the tender.

And what, for this frail world, were all
  That mortals do or suffer,
Did no responsive harp, no pen,
  Memorial tribute offer?
Yea, what were mighty Nature's self?
  Her features, could they win us,
Unhelped by the poetic voice
  That hourly speaks within us?

Nor deem that localised Romance
  Plays false with our affections;
Unsanctifies our tears — made sport
  For fanciful dejections:
Ah, no! the visions of the past
  Sustain the heart in feeling
Life as she is — our changeful Life,
  With friends and kindred dealing.

Bear witness, Ye, whose thoughts that day
In Yarrow's groves were centred;
Who through the silent portal arch
Of mouldering Newark entered;
And clomb the winding stair that once
Too timidly was mounted
By the "last Minstrel,"° (not the last!)
Ere he his Tale recounted.

Flow on for ever, Yarrow Stream!
Fulfil thy pensive duty,
Well pleased that future Bards should chant
For simple hearts thy beauty;
To dream-light dear while yet unseen,
Dear to the common sunshine,
And dearer still, as now I feel,
To memory's shadowy moonshine!

She was a Phantom of delight°
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;

A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;°
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A Traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud°
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed — and gazed — but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

THE AFFLICTION OF MARGARET°——

I

Where art thou, my beloved Son,
Where art thou, worse to me than dead?
Oh find me, prosperous or undone!
Or, if the grave be now thy bed,
Why am I ignorant of the same
That I may rest; and neither blame
Nor sorrow may attend thy name?

II

Seven years, alas! to have received
No tidings of an only child;
To have despaired, have hoped, believed,
And been for evermore beguiled,
Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss!
I catch at them, and then I miss;
Was ever darkness like to this?

III

He was among the prime in worth,
An object beauteous to behold;
Well born, well bred; I sent him forth
Ingenuous, innocent, and bold:
If things ensued that wanted grace,
As hath been said, they were not base;
And never blush was on my face.

IV

Ah! little doth the young one dream,
When full of play and childish cares,
What power is in his wildest scream,
Heard by his mother unawares!
He knows it not, he cannot guess:
Years to a mother bring distress;
But do not make her love the less.

V

Neglect me! no, I suffered long
From that ill thought; and, being blind,
Said, "Pride shall help me in my wrong;
Kind mother have I been, as kind
As ever breathed:" and that is true;
I've wet my path with tears like dew,
Weeping for him when no one knew.

VI

My Son, if thou be humbled, poor,
Hopeless of honour and of gain,
Oh! do not dread thy mother's door;
Think not of me with grief and pain:
I now can see with better eyes;
And worldly grandeur I despise,
And fortune with her gifts and lies.

VII

Alas! the fowls of heaven have wings,
And blasts of heaven will aid their flight;
They mount — how short a voyage brings
The wanderers back to their delight!
Chains tie us down by land and sea;
And wishes, vain as mine, may be
All that is left to comfort thee.

VIII

Perhaps some dungeon hears thee groan,
Maimed, mangled by inhuman men:
Or thou upon a desert thrown
Inheritest the lion's den;
Or hast been summoned to the deep,
Thou, thou and all thy mates, to keep
An incommunicable sleep.°

IX

I look for ghosts; but none will force
Their way to me: 'tis falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Between the living and the dead;
For, surely, then I should have sight
Of him I wait for day and night,
With love and longings infinite.

X

My apprehensions come in crowds;
I dread the rustling of the grass;
The very shadows of the clouds
Have power to shake me as they pass.
I question things and do not find
One that will answer to my mind;
And all the world appears unkind.

XI

Beyond participation lie
My troubles, and beyond relief:
If any chance to heave a sigh,
They pity me, and not my grief.
Then come to me, my Son, or send
Some tidings that my woes may end;
I have no other earthly friend!

TO A SKY-LARK°

Up with me! up with me into the clouds!
For thy song, Lark, is strong;
Up with me, up with me into the clouds!
Singing, singing,
With clouds and sky about thee ringing,
Lift me, guide me till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind!

I have walked through wildernesses dreary,
And to-day my heart is weary;
Had I now the wings of a Faery,
Up to thee would I fly.
There is madness about thee, and joy divine
In that song of thine;
Lift me, guide me high and high
To thy banqueting-place in the sky.

Joyous as morning,
Thou art laughing and scorning;
Thou hast a nest for thy love and thy rest,
And, though little troubled with sloth,
Drunken Lark! thou would'st be loth
To be such a traveller as I.
Happy, happy Liver,
With a soul as strong as a mountain river
Pouring out praise to the Almighty Giver,
Joy and jollity be with us both!

Alas! my journey, rugged and uneven,
Through prickly moors or dusty ways must wind;
But hearing thee, or others of thy kind,
As full of gladness and as free of heaven,
I, with my fate contented, will plod on,
And hope for higher raptures, when life's day is done.

TO A SKY-LARK°

Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine;
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!

LOUISA°

AFTER ACCOMPANYING HER ON A MOUNTAIN EXCURSION

I met Louisa in the shade,
And, having seen that lovely Maid,
Why should I fear to say
That, nymph-like, she is fleet and strong,
And down the rocks can leap along
Like rivulets in May?

She loves her fire, her cottage-home;
Yet o'er the moorland will she roam
In weather rough and bleak;
And, when against the wind she strains,
Oh! might I kiss the mountain rains
That sparkle on her cheek.

Take all that's mine "beneath the moon,"
If I with her but half a noon
May sit beneath the walls
Of some old cave, or mossy nook,
When up she winds along the brook
To hunt the waterfalls.

TO A YOUNG LADY°,

WHO HAD BEEN REPROACHED FOR TAKING LONG WALKS IN THE COUNTRY

Dear Child of Nature, let them rail!
— There is a nest in a green dale,
A harbour and a hold;
Where thou, a Wife and Friend, shalt see
Thy own heart-stirring days, and be
A light to young and old.

There, healthy as a shepherd boy,
And treading among flowers of joy
Which at no season fade,
Thou, while thy babes around thee cling,
Shalt show us how divine a thing
A Woman may be made.

Thy thoughts and feelings shall not die,
Nor leave thee, when grey hairs are nigh,
A melancholy slave;
But an old age serene and bright,
And lovely as a Lapland night,
Shall lead thee to thy grave.

Yes, it was the mountain Echo°
Solitary, clear, profound,
Answering to the shouting Cuckoo,
Giving to her sound for sound!

Unsolicited reply
To a babbling wanderer sent;
Like her ordinary cry,
Like — but oh, how different!

Hears not also mortal Life?
Hear not we, unthinking Creatures!
Slaves of folly, love, or strife —
Voices of two different natures?

Have not *we* too? — yes, we have
Answers, and we know not whence;
Echoes from beyond the grave,
Recognised intelligence!

Such rebounds our inward ear
Catches sometimes from afar —
Listen, ponder, hold them dear;
For of God, — of God they are.

O Nightingale! thou surely art°
A creature of a "fiery heart:" —
These notes of thine — they pierce and pierce;
Tumultuous harmony and fierce!
Thou sing'st as if the God of wine
Had helped thee to a Valentine;
A song in mockery and despite
Of shades, and dews, and silent night;
And steady bliss, and all the loves
Now sleeping in these peaceful groves.
I heard a Stock-dove sing or say
His homely tale, this very day;
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come at by the breeze:
He did not cease; but cooed — and cooed;
And somewhat pensively he wooed:

He sang of love, with quiet blending,
Slow to begin, and never ending;
Of serious faith, and inward glee;
That was the song — the song for me!

THE PRIMROSE OF THE ROCK°

A Rock there is whose homely front
The passing traveller slights;
Yet there the glow-worms hang their lamps,
Like stars, at various heights;
And one coy Primrose to that Rock
The vernal breeze invites.

What hideous warfare hath been waged,
What kingdoms overthrown,
Since first I spied that Primrose-tuft
And marked it for my own;
A lasting link in Nature's chain
From highest heaven let down!

The flowers, still faithful to the stems,
Their fellowship renew;
The stems are faithful to the root,
That worketh out of view;
And to the rock the root adheres
In every fibre true.

Close clings to earth the living rock,
Though threatening still to fall;
The earth is constant to her sphere;
And God upholds them all:
So blooms this lonely Plant, nor dreads
Her annual funeral.

* * * * *

Here closed the meditative strain;
  But air breathed soft that day,
The hoary mountain-heights were cheered,
  The sunny vale looked gay;
And to the Primrose of the Rock
  I gave this after-lay.

I sang — Let myriads of bright flowers,
  Like Thee, in field and grove
Revive unenvied; — mightier far,
  Than tremblings that reprove
Our vernal tendencies to hope,
  Is God's redeeming love;

That love which changed — for wan disease,
  For sorrow that had bent
O'er hopeless dust, for withered age —
  Their moral element,
And turned the thistles of a curse
  To types beneficent.

Sin-blighted though we are, we too,
  The reasoning Sons of Men,
From one oblivious winter called
  Shall rise, and breathe again;
And in eternal summer lose
  Our threescore years and ten.

To humbleness of heart descends
  This prescience from on high,
The faith that elevates the just,
  Before and when they die;
And makes each soul a separate heaven,
  A court for Deity.

2. ELEGIAC POEMS AND ODES

ELEGIAC STANZAS°

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE, IN A STORM, PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

I was thy neighbour once,° thou rugged Pile!
Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee:
I saw thee every day; and all the while
Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air!
So like, so very like, was day to day!
Whene'er I looked, thy Image still was there;
It trembled, but it never passed away.

How perfect was the calm! it seemed no sleep;
No mood, which season takes away, or brings:
I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.

Ah! THEN, if mine had been the Painter's hand,
To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,
The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile
Amid a world how different from this!
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss.

Thou shouldst have seemed a treasure-house divine
Of peaceful years; a chronicle of heaven; —
Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease,
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;
No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
Such Picture would I at that time have made:
And seen the soul of truth in every part,
A steadfast peace that might not be betrayed.

So once it would have been, — 'tis so no more;
I have submitted to a new control:
A power is gone, which nothing can restore;
A deep distress hath humanised my Soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea, and be what I have been:
The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old;
This, which I know, I speak with mind serene.

Then, Beaumont, Friend! who would have been the Friend,
If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,
This work of thine I blame not, but commend;
This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

O 'tis a passionate Work! — yet wise and well,
Well chosen is the spirit that is here;
That Hulk which labours in the deadly swell,
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear!

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves,
Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,
Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind!°
Such happiness, wherever it be known,
Is to be pitied; for 'tis surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights of what is to be borne!
Such sights, or worse, as are before me here. —
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

ODE TO DUTY°

"Jam non consilio bonus, sed more eò perductus, ut non tantum rectè facere possim, sed nisi rectè facere non possim."

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot
Who do thy work, and know it not:
Oh! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.

And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are
fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!

Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live!

ODE[c]

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

"The Child is Father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety."

I

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore; —
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,°
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday; —
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy!

IV

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel — I feel it all.
Oh, evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the Children are culling
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm: —
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
— But there's a Tree, of many, one,

A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely Nurse doth all she can
To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' Darling of a pygmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learned art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral;
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little Actor cons another part;°
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy Soul's immensity;
Thou best Philosopher,° who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted forever by the eternal mind,—
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;

Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest;
Delight and liberty. the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make

Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now forever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves!

Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet;
The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

LAODAMIA°

"With sacrifice before the rising morn
Vows have I made by fruitless hope inspired;
And from the infernal Gods, 'mid shades forlorn
Of night, my slaughtered Lord have I required:
Celestial pity I again implore;—
Restore him to my sight—great Jove, restore!"

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
With faith, the Suppliant heavenward lifts her hands;
While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
Her countenance brightens—and her eye expands;
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows;
And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror! what hath she perceived?—O joy!
What doth she look on?—whom doth she behold?
Her Hero slain upon the beach of Troy?
His vital presence? his corporeal mould?
It is—if sense deceive her not—'tis He!
And a God leads him, wingèd Mercury!

Mild Hermes spake — and touched her with his wand
That calms all fear; "Such grace hath crowned thy prayer,
Laodamía! that at Jove's command
Thy Husband walks the paths of upper air:
He comes to tarry with thee three hours' space;
Accept the gift, behold him face to face!"

Forth sprang the impassioned Queen her Lord to clasp;
Again that consummation she essayed;
But unsubstantial Form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made.
The Phantom parts — but parts to re-unite,
And re-assume his place before her sight.

"Protesiláus, lo! thy guide is gone!
Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice:
This is our palace, — yonder is thy throne;
Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will rejoice.
Not to appal me have the gods bestowed
This precious boon; and blest a sad abode."

"Great Jove, Laodamía! doth not leave
His gifts imperfect: — Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive;
But in reward of thy fidelity.
And something also did my worth obtain;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

"Thou knowest, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan strand
Should die; but me the threat could not withhold:
A generous cause a victim did demand;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain;
A self-devoted chief — by Hector° slain."

"Supreme of Heroes — bravest, noblest, best!
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
Which then, when tens of thousands were deprest

By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore;
Thou found'st — and I forgive thee — here thou art —
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

"But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
Thou should'st elude the malice of the grave:
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian° air.

"No Spectre greets me, — no vain Shadow this;
Come, blooming Hero, place thee by my side!
Give, on this well-known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day, a second time thy bride!"
Jove frowned in heaven: the conscious Parcæ° threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.°

"This visage tells thee that my doom is past:
Nor should the change be mourned, even if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish. Earth destroys
Those raptures duly — Erebus° disdains:
Calm pleasures there abide — majestic pains.

"Be taught, O faithful Consort, to control
Rebellious passion: for the Gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul;
A fervent, not ungovernable, love.
Thy transports moderate; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn —"

"Ah, wherefore? — did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian Monster of the tomb
Alcestis,° a reanimated corse,
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom?
Medea's spells dispersed the weight of years,
And Æson stood a youth 'mid youthful peers.

"The Gods to us are merciful — and they
Yet further may relent: for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic potent over sun and star,
Is love, though oft to agony distrest,
And though his favourite seat be feeble woman's breast.

"But if thou goest, I follow —" "Peace!" he said, —
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered;
The ghastly colour from his lips had fled;
In his deportment, shape, and mien, appeared
Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
Brought from a pensive though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as Spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away — no strife to heal —
The past unsighed for, and the future sure;
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued;

Of all that is most beauteous — imaged there
In happier beauty; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the Soul shall enter which hath earned
That privilege by virtue. — "Ill," said he,
"The end of man's existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry
Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight,
While tears were thy best pastime, day and night;

"And while my youthful peers before my eyes
(Each hero following his peculiar bent)
Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise

By martial sports, — or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in council were detained;
What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchained.°

"The wished-for wind was given: — I then revolved
The oracle, upon the silent sea;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
The foremost prow in pressing to the strand, —
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

"Yet bitter, oft-times bitter, was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, beloved Wife!
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life, —
The paths which we had trod — these fountains, flowers,
My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

"But should suspense permit the Foe to cry,
'Behold they tremble! — haughty their array,
Yet of their number no one dares to die?'
In soul I swept the indignity away:
Old frailties then recurred: — but lofty thought,
In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

"And thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
In reason, in self-government too slow;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
Our blest re-union on the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sympathised;
Be thy affections raised and solemnised.

"Learn, by a mortal yearning, to ascend —
Seeking a higher object. Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end;
For this the passion to excess was driven —
That self might be annulled: her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love."—

Aloud she shrieked! for Hermes reappears!
Round the dear Shade she would have clung — 'tis vain:
The hours are past — too brief had they been years;
And him no mortal effort can detain:
Swift, toward the realms that know not earthly day,
He through the portal takes his silent way,
And on the palace-floor a lifeless corse She lay.

Thus, all in vain exhorted and reproved,°
She perished; and, as for a wilful crime,
By the just Gods whom no weak pity moved,
Was doomed to wear out her appointed time,
Apart from happy Ghosts, that gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

— Yet tears to human suffering are due;
And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
Are mourned by man, and not by man alone,
As fondly he believes. — Upon the side
Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
From out the tomb of him for whom she died;
And ever, when such stature they had gained
That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
The trees' tall summits withered at the sight;
A constant interchange of growth and blight![1]

DION°

I

Serene, and fitted to embrace,
Where'er he turned, a swan-like grace

[1] For the account of these long-lived trees, see Pliny's *Natural History*, lib. xvi. cap. 44; and for the features in the character of Protesilaus, see the *Iphigenia in Aulis* of Euripides. Virgil places the Shade of Laodamia in a mournful region, among unhappy Lovers,

"— His Laodamia
It comes. —"

Of haughtiness without pretence,
And to unfold a still magnificence,
Was princely Dion, in the power
And beauty of his happier hour.
And what pure homage *then* did wait
On Dion's virtues, while the lunar beam
Of Plato's genius, from its lofty sphere,
Fell round him in the grove of Academe,°
Softening their inbred dignity austere —
That he, not too elate
With self-sufficing solitude,
But with majestic lowliness endued,
Might in the universal bosom reign,
And from affectionate observance gain
Help, under every change of adverse fate.

II

Five thousand warriors — O the rapturous day!
Each crowned with flowers, and armed with spear and shield,
Or ruder weapon which their course might yield,
To Syracuse advance in bright array.
Who leads them on? — The anxious people see
Long-exiled Dion marching at their head,
He also crowned with flowers of Sicily,
And in a white, far-beaming, corselet clad!
Pure transport undisturbed by doubt or fear
The gazers feel; and, rushing to the plain,
Salute those strangers as a holy train
Or blest procession (to the Immortals dear)
That brought their precious liberty again.
Lo! when the gates are entered, on each hand,
Down the long street, rich goblets filled with wine
In seemly order stand,
On tables set, as if for rights divine; —
And, as the great Deliverer marches by,
He looks on festal ground with fruits bestrown;
And flowers are on his person thrown

In boundless prodigality;
Nor doth the general voice abstain from prayer,
Invoking Dion's tutelary care,
As if a very Deity he were!

III

Mourn, hills and groves of Attica! and mourn
Ilissus,° bending o'er thy classic urn!
Mourn, and lament for him whose spirit dreads
Your once sweet memory, studious walks and shades!
For him who to divinity aspired,
Not on the breath of popular applause,
But through dependence on the sacred laws
Framed in the schools where Wisdom dwelt retired,
Intent to trace the ideal path of right
(More fair than heaven's broad causeway paved with stars)
Which Dion learned to measure with sublime delight; —
But He hath overleaped the eternal bars;
And, following guides whose craft holds no consent
With aught that breathes the ethereal element,
Hath stained the robes of civil power with blood,
Unjustly shed, though for the public good.
Whence doubts that came too late, and wishes vain,
Hollow excuses, and triumphant pain;
And oft his cogitations sink as low
As, through the abysses of a joyless heart,
The heaviest plummet of despair can go —
But whence that sudden check? that fearful start!
He hears an uncouth sound —
Anon his lifted eyes
Saw, at a long-drawn gallery's dusky bound,
A Shape of more than mortal size
And hideous aspect, stalking round and round!
A woman's garb the Phantom wore,
And fiercely swept the marble floor, —
Like Auster° whirling to and fro,
His force on Caspian foam to try;

Or Boreas° when he scours the snow
That skins the plains of Thessaly,
Or when aloft on Mænalus° he stops
His flight, 'mid eddying pine-tree tops!

IV

So, but from toil less sign of profit reaping,
The sullen Spectre to her purpose bowed,
Sweeping — vehemently sweeping —
No pause admitted, no design avowed!
"Avaunt, inexplicable Guest! — avaunt,"
Exclaimed the Chieftain — "let me rather see
The coronal that coiling vipers make;
The torch that flames with many a lurid flake,
And the long train of doleful pageantry
Which they behold, whom vengeful Furies haunt;
Who, while they struggle from the scourge to flee,
Move where the blasted soil is not unworn,
And, in their anguish, bear what other minds have borne!"

V

But Shapes that come not at an earthly call,
Will not depart when mortal voices bid;
Lords of the visionary eye whose lid,
Once raised, remains aghast, and will not fall!
Ye Gods, thought He, that servile Implement
Obeys a mystical intent!
Your Minister would brush away
The spots that to my soul adhere;
But should she labour night and day,
They will not, cannot disappear;
Whence angry perturbations, — and that look
Which no philosophy can brook!

VI

Ill-fated Chief! there are whose hopes are built
Upon the ruins of thy glorious name;

Who, through the portal of one moment's guilt,
Pursue thee with their deadly aim!
O matchless perfidy! portentous lust
Of monstrous crime!—that horror-striking blade,
Drawn in defiance of the Gods, hath laid
The noble Syracusan low in dust!
Shuddered the walls—the marble city wept—
And sylvan places heaved a pensive sigh;
But in calm peace the appointed Victim slept,
As he had fallen in magnanimity;
Of spirit too capacious to require
That Destiny her course should change; too just
To his own native greatness to desire
That wretched boon, days lengthened by mistrust.
So were the hopeless troubles, that involved
The soul of Dion, instantly dissolved.
Released from life and cares of princely state,
He left this moral grafted on his Fate;
"Him only pleasure leads, and peace attends,
Him, only him, the shield of Jove defends,
Whose means are fair and spotless as his ends."

COMPOSED UPON AN EVENING OF EXTRAORDINARY SPLENDOUR AND BEAUTY.

I

Had this effulgence disappeared
With flying haste, I might have sent,
Among the speechless clouds, a look
Of blank astonishment;
But 'tis endued with power to stay,
And sanctify one closing day,
That frail Mortality may see—
What is?—ah no, but what *can* be!
Time was when field and watery cove
With modulated echoes rang,
While choirs of fervent Angels sang
Their vespers in the grove;
Or, crowning, star-like, each some sovereign height,

Warbled, for heaven above and earth below,
Strains suitable to both. — Such holy rite,
Methinks, if audibly repeated now
From hill or valley, could not move
Sublimer transport, purer love,
Than doth this silent spectacle — the gleam —
The shadow — and the peace supreme!

II

No sound is uttered, — but a deep
And solemn harmony pervades
The hollow vale from steep to steep,
And penetrates the glades.
Far-distant images draw nigh,
Called forth by wondrous potency
Of beamy radiance, that imbues
Whate'er it strikes with gem-like hues!
In vision exquisitely clear,
Herds range along the mountain side;
And glistening antlers are descried;
And gilded flocks appear.
Thine is the tranquil hour, purpureal Eve!
But long as god-like wish, or hope divine,
Informs my spirit, ne'er can I believe
That this magnificence is wholly thine!
— From worlds not quickened by the sun
A portion of the gift is won;
An intermingling of Heaven's pomp is spread
On ground which British shepherds tread!

III

And, if there be whom broken ties
Afflict, or injuries assail,
You hazy ridges to their eyes
Present a glorious scale,
Climbing suffused with sunny air,
To stop — no record hath told where!
And tempting Fancy to ascend,
And with immortal Spirits blend!

— Wings at my shoulders seem to play;
But, rooted here, I stand and gaze
On those bright steps that heavenward raise
Their practicable way.
Come forth, ye drooping old men, look abroad,
And see to what fair countries ye are bound!
And if some traveller, weary of his road,
Hath slept since noon-tide on the grassy ground,
Ye Genii! to his covert speed;
And wake him with such gentle heed
As may attune his soul to meet the dower
Bestowed on this transcendent hour!

IV

Such hues from their celestial Urn
Were wont to stream before mine eye,
Where'er it wandered in the morn
Of blissful infancy.
This glimpse of glory, why renewed?
Nay, rather speak with gratitude;
For, if a vestige of those gleams
Survived, 'twas only in my dreams.
Dread Power! whom peace and calmness serve
No less than Nature's threatening voice,
If aught unworthy be my choice,
From THEE if I would swerve;
Oh, let thy grace remind me of the light
Full early lost, and fruitlessly deplored;
Which, at this moment, on my waking sight
Appears to shine, by miracle restored;
My soul, though yet confined to earth,
Rejoices in a second birth!
— 'Tis past, the visionary splendour fades;
And night approaches with her shades.

NOTE. — The multiplication of mountain-ridges, described at the commencement of the third Stanza of this Ode, as a kind of Jacob's Ladder, leading to Heaven, is produced either by watery vapours, or sunny haze: — in the present instance by the latter cause. Allusions to the Ode, entitled "Intimations of Immortality," pervade the last stanza of the foregoing Poem.

EXTEMPORE EFFUSION UPON THE DEATH OF JAMES HOGG°

When first, descending from the moorlands,
I saw the Stream of Yarrow° glide
Along a bare and open valley,
The Ettrick Shepherd was my guide.

When last along its banks I wandered,
Through groves that had begun to shed
Their golden leaves upon the pathways,
My steps the Border-minstrel led.

The mighty Minstrel breathes no longer,
'Mid mouldering ruins low he lies;
And death upon the braes of Yarrow,
Has closed the Shepherd-poet's eyes:

Nor has the rolling year twice measured,
From sign to sign, its steadfast course,
Since every mortal power of Coleridge°
Was frozen at its marvellous source;

The rapt One, of the godlike forehead,
The heaven-eyed creature sleeps in earth:
And Lamb,° the frolic and the gentle,
Has vanished from his lonely hearth.

Like clouds that rake the mountain-summits,
Or waves that own no curbing hand,
How fast has brother followed brother
From sunshine to the sunless land!

Yet I, whose lids from infant slumber
Were earlier raised, remain to hear
A timid voice, that asks in whispers,
"Who next will drop and disappear?"

Our haughty life is crowned with darkness,
Like London with its own black wreath,
On which with thee, O Crabbe![o] forth-looking,
I gazed from Hampstead's breezy heath.

As if but yesterday departed,
Thou too art gone before; but why,
O'er ripe fruit, seasonably gathered,
Should frail survivors heave a sigh?

Mourn rather for that holy Spirit,
Sweet as the spring, as ocean deep;
For Her[o] who, ere the summer faded,
Has sunk into a breathless sleep.

No more of old romantic sorrows,
For slaughtered Youth or love-lorn Maid!
With sharper grief is Yarrow smitten,
And Ettrick mourns with her their Poet dead.

II. POEMS OF DESCRIPTION AND REFLECTION

LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR.° JULY 13, 1798

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.[1] — Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,

[1] The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.

Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.
These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration: — feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened: —that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on, —
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh? how oft —
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart —
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all. — I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion; the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye. — That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompence. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime°
Of something far more deeply interfused,

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear, — both what they half° create,[1]
And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.
Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,

[1] This line has a close resemblance to an admirable line of Young's, the exact expression of which I do not recollect.

Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance —
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence — wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love — oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

A NIGHT-PIECE[o]

— The sky is overcast
With a continuous cloud of texture close,
Heavy and wan, all whitened by the Moon,
Which through that veil is indistinctly seen,
A dull, contracted circle, yielding light
So feebly spread that not a shadow falls,
Checkering the ground — from rock, plant, tree, or tower.

At length a pleasant instantaneous gleam
Startles the pensive traveller while he treads
His lonesome path, with unobserving eye
Bent earthwards; he looks up — the clouds are split
Asunder, — and above his head he sees
The clear Moon, and the glory of the heavens.
There, in a black-blue vault she sails along,
Followed by multitudes of stars, that, small
And sharp, and bright, along the dark abyss
Drives as she drives: how fast they wheel away,
Yet vanish not! — the wind is in the tree,
But they are silent; — still they roll along
Immeasurably distant; and the vault,
Built round by those white clouds, enormous clouds,
Still deepens its unfathomable depth.
At length the Vision closes; and the mind,
Not undisturbed by the delight it feels,
Which slowly settles into peaceful calm,
Is left to muse upon the solemn scene.

THERE WAS A BOY°

There was a Boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander!° — many a time,
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake;
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him. — And they would shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call, — with quivering peals,
And loud halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
Redoubled and redoubled; concourse wild
Of jocund din! And, when there came a pause

Of silence such as baffled his best skill:
Then sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain-torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
Into the bosom of the steady lake.
This boy was taken from his mates, and died
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.
Pre-eminent in beauty is the vale
Where he was born and bred: the churchyard hangs°
Upon a slope above the village-school;
And, through that church-yard when my way has led
On summer-evenings, I believe that there
A long half-hour together I have stood
Mute — looking at the grave in which he lies!

NUTTING°

— It seems a day
(I speak of one from many singled out)
One of those heavenly days that cannot die;
When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,
I left our cottage-threshold, sallying forth
With a huge wallet o'er my shoulders slung,
A nutting-crook in hand; and turned my steps
Tow'rd some far-distant wood, a Figure quaint,
Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds
Which for that service had been husbanded,
By exhortation of my frugal Dame —
Motley accoutrement, of power to smile
At thorns, and brakes, and brambles, — and, in truth,
More ragged than need was! O'er pathless rocks,
Through beds of matted fern, and tangled thickets,
Forcing my way, I came to one dear nook
Unvisited, where not a broken bough

Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign
Of devastation; but the hazels rose
Tall and erect, with tempting clusters hung,
A virgin scene! — A little while I stood,
Breathing with such suppression of the heart
As joy delights in; and, with wise restraint
Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
The banquet; — or beneath the trees I sate
Among the flowers, and with the flowers I played;
A temper known to those who, after long
And weary expectation, have been blest
With sudden happiness beyond all hope.
Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves
The violets of five seasons re-appear
And fade, unseen by any human eye;
Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on
For ever; and I saw the sparkling foam,
And — with my cheek on one of those green stones
That, fleeced with moss, under the shady trees,
Lay round me, scattered like a flock of sheep —
I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,
In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
Tribute to ease; and, of its joy secure,
The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones,
And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash
And merciless ravage: and the shady nook
Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,
Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up
Their quiet being: and, unless I now
Confound my present feelings with the past,
Ere from the mutilated bower I turned
Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,
I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
The silent trees, and saw the intruding sky. —
Then, dearest Maiden, move along these shades
In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand
Touch — for there is a spirit in the woods.

YEW-TREES°

THERE is a Yew-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,°
Which to this day stands single, in the midst
Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore;
Not loth to furnish weapons for the bands
Of Umfraville or Percy° ere they marched
To Scotland's heaths; or those that crossed the sea
And drew their sounding bows at Azincour°,
Perhaps at earlier Crecy, or Poictiers.
Of vast circumference and gloom profound
This solitary Tree! a living thing
Produced too slowly ever to decay;
Of form and aspect too magnificent
To be destroyed. But worthier still of note
Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale°,
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;
Huge trunks! and each particular trunk a growth
Of intertwisted fibres serpentine
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved;
Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks
That threaten the profane;—a pillared shade,
Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
Perennially—beneath whose sable roof
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose decked
With unrejoicing berries—ghostly Shapes
May meet at noontide; Fear and trembling Hope,
Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton
And time the Shadow;—there to celebrate,
As in a natural temple scattered o'er
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
United worship; or in mute repose
To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring from Glaramara's° inmost caves.

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE°

I

There was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods;
Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods;
The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters;
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters.

II

All things that love the sun are out of doors;
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
The grass is bright with rain-drops; — on the moors
The hare is running races in her mirth;
And with her feet she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist, that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

III

I was a Traveller then upon the moor;
I saw the hare that raced about with joy;
I heard the woods and distant waters roar;
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy:
The pleasant season did my heart employ:
My old remembrances went from me wholly;
And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy.

IV

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
Of joy in minds that can no further go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
In our dejection do we sink as low;

To me that morning did it happen so;
And fears and fancies thick upon me came;
Dim sadness — and blind thoughts, I knew not, nor could name.

V

I heard the sky-lark warbling in the sky;
And I bethought me of the playful hare:
Even such a happy Child of earth am I;
Even as these blissful creatures do I fare;
Far from the world I walk, and from all care;
But there may come another day to me —
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

VI

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood;
As if all needful things would come unsought
To genial faith, still rich in genial good;
But how can He expect that others should
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all?

VII

I thought of Chatterton,° the marvellous Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride;
Of Him who walked° in glory and in joy
Following his plough, along the mountain-side:
By our own spirits are we deified:
We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof come in the end despondency and madness.

VIII

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace,
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befell that, in this lonely place,
When I with these untoward thoughts had striven,

Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven
I saw a Man before me unawares:
The oldest man he seemed that ever wore grey hairs.

IX

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence;
Wonder to all who do the same espy,
By what means it could thither come, and whence;
So that it seems a thing endued with sense:
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself;

X

Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor dead,
Nor all asleep — in his extreme old age:
His body was bent double, feet and head
Coming together in life's pilgrimage;
As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
A more than human weight upon his frame had cast.

XI

Himself he propped, limbs, body, and pale face,
Upon a long grey staff of shaven wood:
And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
Upon the margin of that moorish flood
Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
That heareth not the loud winds when they call
And moveth all together, if it move at all.

XII

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
Upon the muddy water, which he conned,
As if he had been reading in a book:

And now a stranger's privilege I took;
And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
"This morning gives us promise of a glorious day."

XIII

A gentle answer did the old Man make,
In courteous speech which forth he slowly drew:
And him with further words I thus bespake,
"What occupation do you there pursue?
This is a lonesome place for one like you."
Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet-vivid eyes.

XIV

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
But each in solemn order followed each,
With something of a lofty utterance drest—
Choice word and measured phrase, above the reach
Of ordinary men; a stately speech;
Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men, who give to God and man their dues.

XV

He told, that to these waters he had come
To gather leeches, being old and poor:
Employment hazardous and wearisome!
And he had many hardships to endure:
From pond to pond he roamed, from moor to moor;
Housing, with God's good help, by choice or chance,
And in this way he gained an honest maintenance.

XVI

The old Man still stood talking by my side;
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarce heard; nor word from word could I divide;
And the whole body of the Man did seem

Like one whom I had met with in a dream;
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.

XVII

My former thoughts returned: the fear that kills;
And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills;
And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
— Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
My question eagerly did I renew,
"How is it that you live, and what is it you do?"

XVIII

He with a smile did then his words repeat;
And said that, gathering leeches, far and wide
He travelled; stirring thus about his feet
The waters of the pools where they abide.
"Once I could meet with them on every side;
But they have dwindled long by slow decay;
Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may."

XIX

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
The old Man's shape, and speech — all troubled me:
In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
About the weary moors continually,
Wandering about alone and silently.
While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
He, having made a pause, the same discourse renewed.

XX

And soon with this he other matter blended,
Cheerfully uttered, with demeanour kind,
But stately in the main; and when he ended,
I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.
"God," said I, "be my help and stay secure;
I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor!"

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN MY POCKET-COPY OF THOMSON'S "CASTLE OF INDOLENCE"

Within our happy Castle there dwelt One
Whom without blame I may not overlook;
For never sun on living creature shone
Who more devout enjoyment with us took:
Here on his hours he hung as on a book,
On his own time here would he float away,
As doth a fly upon a summer brook;
But go to-morrow, or belike to-day,
Seek for him, — he is fled; and whither none can say.

Thus often would he leave our peaceful home,
And find elsewhere his business or delight;
Out of our Valley's limits did he roam:
Full many a time, upon a stormy night,
His voice came to us from the neighbouring height:
Oft could we see him driving full in view
At mid-day when the sun was shining bright;
What ill was on him, what he had to do,
A mighty wonder bred among our quiet crew.

Ah! piteous sight it was to see this Man
When he came back to us, a withered flower, —
Or like a sinful creature, pale and wan.
Down would he sit; and without strength or power
Look at the common grass from hour to hour:
And oftentimes, how long I fear to say,
Where apple-trees in blossom made a bower,
Retired in that sunshiny shade he lay;
And, like a naked Indian, slept himself away.

Great wonder to our gentle tribe it was
Whenever from our Valley he withdrew;
For happier soul no living creature has
Than he had, being here the long day through.

Some thought he was a lover and did woo:
Some thought far worse of him, and judged him wrong;
But verse was what he had been wedded to;
And his own mind did like a tempest strong
Come to him thus, and drove the weary Wight along.

With him there often walked in friendly guise,
Or lay upon the moss by brook or tree,
A noticeable Man with large grey eyes,
And a pale face that seemed undoubtedly
As if a blooming face it ought to be;
Heavy his low-hung lip did oft appear,
Deprest by weight of musing Phantasy;
Profound his forehead was, though not severe;
Yet some did think that he had little business here:

Sweet heaven forfend! his was a lawful right;
Noisy he was, and gamesome as a boy;
His limbs would toss about him with delight,
Like branches when strong winds the trees annoy.
Nor lacked his calmer hours device or toy
To banish listlessness and irksome care;
He would have taught you how you might employ
Yourself; and many did to him repair,—
And certes not in vain; he had inventions rare.

Expedients, too, of simplest sort he tried:
Long blades of grass, plucked round him as he lay,
Made, to his ear attentively applied,
A pipe on which the wind would deftly play;
Glasses he had, that little things display,
The beetle panoplied in gems and gold,
A mailèd angel on a battle-day;
The mysteries that cups of flowers enfold,
And all the gorgeous sights which fairies do behold.

He would entice that other Man to hear
His music, and to view his imagery:
And, sooth, these two were each to the other dear:

No livelier love in such a place could be:
There did they dwell — from earthly labour free,
As happy spirits as were ever seen;
If but a bird, to keep them company,
Or butterfly sate down, they were, I ween,
As pleased as if the same had been a Maiden-queen.

TO H. C.°

SIX YEARS OLD

O THOU! whose fancies from afar are brought;
Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,
And fittest to unutterable thought
The breeze-like motion and the self-born carol;
Thou faery voyager! that dost float
In such clear water, that thy boat
May rather seem
To brood on air than on an earthly stream;
Suspended in a stream as clear as sky,
Where earth and heaven do make one imagery;
O blessed vision! happy child!
Thou art so exquisitely wild,
I think of thee with many fears°
For what may be thy lot in future years.
I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest,
Lord of thy house and hospitality;
And Grief, uneasy lover! never rest
But when she sate within the touch of thee.
O too industrious folly!
O vain and causeless melancholy!
Nature will either end thee quite;
Or, lengthening out thy season of delight,
Preserve for thee, by individual right,
A young lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks.
What hast thou to do with sorrow,
Or the injuries of to-morrow?

Thou art a dew-drop, which the morn brings forth,
Ill fitted to sustain unkindly shocks,
Or to be trailed along the soiling earth;
A gem that glitters while it lives,
And no forewarning gives;
But, at the touch of wrong, without a strife
Slips in a moment out of life.

TO A HIGHLAND GIRL°

AT INVERSNEYDE, UPON LOCH LOMOND

Sweet Highland Girl, a very shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower!
Twice seven consenting years have shed
Their utmost bounty on thy head:
And these grey rocks; that household lawn;
Those trees, a veil just half withdrawn;
This fall of water that doth make
A murmur near the silent lake;
This little bay; a quiet road
That holds in shelter thy Abode —
In truth together do ye seem
Like something fashioned in a dream;
Such Forms as from their covert peep
When earthly cares are laid asleep!
But, O fair Creature! in the light
Of common day, so heavenly bright,
I bless Thee, Vision as thou art,
I bless thee with a human heart;
God shield thee to thy latest years!
Thee, neither know I, nor thy peers;
And yet my eyes are filled with tears.
With earnest feeling I shall pray
For thee when I am far away:
For never saw I mien, or face,
In which more plainly I could trace

Benignity and home-bred sense
Ripening in perfect innocence.
Here scattered, like a random seed,
Remote from men, Thou dost not need
The embarrassed look of shy distress,
And maidenly shamefacedness:
Thou wear'st upon thy forehead clear
The freedom of a Mountaineer:
A face with gladness overspread!
Soft smiles, by human kindness bred!
And seemliness complete, that sways
Thy courtesies, about thee plays;
With no restraint, but such as springs
From quick and eager visitings
Of thoughts that lie beyond the reach
Of thy few words of English speech:
A bondage sweetly brooked, a strife
That gives thy gestures grace and life!
So have I, not unmoved in mind,
Seen birds of tempest-loving-kind—
Thus beating up against the wind.
  What hand but would a garland cull
For thee who art so beautiful?
O happy pleasure! here to dwell
Beside thee in some heathy dell;
Adopt your homely ways, and dress,
A Shepherd, thou a Shepherdess!
But I could frame a wish for thee
More like a grave reality:
Thou art to me but as a wave
Of the wild sea; and I would have
Some claim upon thee, if I could,
Though but of common neighbourhood.
What joy to hear thee, and to see!
Thy elder Brother I would be,
Thy Father—anything to thee!
  Now thanks to Heaven! that of its grace
Hath led me to this lonely place.
Joy have I had; and going hence

I bear away my recompense.
In spots like these it is we prize
Our Memory, feel that she hath eyes:
Then, why should I be loth to stir?
I feel this place was made for her;
To give new pleasure like the past,
Continued long as life shall last.
Nor am I loth, though pleased at heart,
Sweet Highland Girl! from thee to part;
For I, methinks, till I grow old,
As fair before me shall behold,
As I do now, the cabin small,
The lake, the bay, the waterfall;
And Thee, the Spirit of them all!

GLEN ALMAIN;°

OR, THE NARROW GLEN

In this still place, remote from men,
Sleeps Ossian,° in the NARROW GLEN;
In this still place, where murmurs on
But one meek streamlet, only one:
He sang of battles, and the breath
Of stormy war, and violent death;
And should, methinks, when all was past,
Have rightfully been laid at last
Where rocks were rudely heaped, and rent
As by a spirit turbulent;
Where sights were rough, and sounds were wild,
And everything unreconciled;
In some complaining, dim retreat,
For fear and melancholy meet;
But this is calm; there cannot be
A more entire tranquillity.
Does then the Bard sleep here indeed?
Or is it but a groundless creed?

What matters it?—I blame them not
Whose Fancy in this lonely Spot
Was moved; and in such way expressed
Their notion of its perfect rest.
A convent, even a hermit's cell,
Would break the silence of this Dell:
It is not quiet, is not ease;
But something deeper far than these:
The separation that is here
Is of the grave; and of austere
Yet happy feelings of the dead:
And, therefore, was it rightly said
That Ossian, last of all his race!
Lies buried in this lonely place.

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR[9]

Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
—It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought:
Whose high endeavours are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care;
Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives:
By objects, which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate;

Is placable — because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
— 'Tis he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He labours good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows:
— Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honourable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honours, or for worldly state;
Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all:
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a Lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a Man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
Or if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need:
— He who, though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans

To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes;
Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,
Are at his heart; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve;
More brave for this, that he hath much to love:—
'Tis, finally, the Man, who, lifted high,
Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
Or left unthought-of in obscurity,—
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not—
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be won:
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpast:
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead unprofitable name—
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of heaven's applause:
This is the happy Warrior; this is He
That every Man in arms should wish to be.

III. NARRATIVE POEMS

THE BROTHERS°

"These Tourists, heaven preserve us! needs must live
A profitable life: some glance along,
Rapid and gay, as if the earth were air,
And they were butterflies to wheel about
Long as the summer lasted: some, as wise,
Perched on the forehead of a jutting crag,
Pencil in hand and book upon the knee,
Will look and scribble, scribble on and look,
Until a man might travel twelve stout miles,
Or reap an acre of his neighbour's corn.
But, for that moping Son of Idleness,
Why can he tarry *yonder?* — In our church-yard
Is neither epitaph nor monument,
Tombstone nor name — only the turf we tread
And a few natural graves."
To Jane, his wife,
Thus spake the homely Priest of Ennerdale.
It was a July evening; and he sate
Upon the long stone-seat beneath the eaves
Of his old cottage, — as it chanced, that day,
Employed in winter's work. Upon the stone
His wife sate near him, teasing matted wool,
While, from the twin cards toothed with glittering wire,
He fed the spindle of his youngest child,
Who, in the open air, with due accord
Of busy hands and back-and-forward steps,
Her large round wheel was turning. Towards the field
In which the Parish Chapel stood alone,
Girt round with a bare ring of mossy wall,
While half an hour went by, the Priest had sent

Many a long look of wonder: and at last,
Risen from his seat, beside the snow-white ridge
Of carded wool which the old man had piled
He laid his implements with gentle care,
Each in the other locked; and, down the path
That from his cottage to the church-yard led,
He took his way, impatient to accost
The Stranger, whom he saw still lingering there.
'Twas one well known to him in former days,
A Shepherd-lad; who ere his sixteenth year
Had left that calling, tempted to entrust
His expectations to the fickle winds
And perilous waters; with the mariners
A fellow-mariner; — and so had fared
Through twenty seasons; but he had been reared
Among the mountains, and he in his heart
Was half a shepherd on the stormy seas.
Oft in the piping shrouds had Leonard heard
The tones of waterfalls, and inland sounds
Of caves and trees: — and when the regular wind
Between the tropics filled the steady sail,
And blew with the same breath through days and weeks,
Lengthening invisibly its weary line
Along the cloudless Main, he, in those hours
Of tiresome indolence, would often hang
Over the vessel's side, and gaze and gaze;
And, while the broad blue wave and sparkling foam
Flashed round him images and hues that wrought
In union with the employment of his heart,
He, thus by feverish passion overcome,
Even with the organs of his bodily eye,
Below him, in the bosom of the deep,
Saw mountains; saw the forms of sheep that grazed
On verdant hills — with dwellings among trees,
And shepherds clad in the same country grey
Which he himself had worn.[1]

[1] This description of the Calenture is sketched from an imperfect recollection of an admirable one in prose, by Mr. Gilbert, author of the *Hurricane*.

And now, at last,
From perils manifold, with some small wealth
Acquired by traffic 'mid the Indian Isles,
To his paternal home he is returned,
With a determined purpose to resume
The life he had lived there; both for the sake
Of many darling pleasures, and the love
Which to an only brother he has borne
In all his hardships, since that happy time
When, whether it blew foul or fair, they two
Were brother-shepherds on their native hills.
— They were the last of all their race: and now,
When Leonard had approached his home, his heart
Failed in him; and, not venturing to enquire
Tidings of one so long and dearly loved,
He to the solitary church-yard turned;
That, as he knew in what particular spot
His family were laid, he thence might learn
If still his Brother lived, or to the file
Another grave was added. — He had found
Another grave, — near which a full half-hour
He had remained; but, as he gazed, there grew
Such a confusion in his memory,
That he began to doubt; and even to hope
That he had seen this heap of turf before, —
That it was not another grave; but one
He had forgotten. He had lost his path,
As up the vale, that afternoon, he walked
Through fields which once had been well known to him:
And oh what joy this recollection now
Sent to his heart! he lifted up his eyes,
And, looking round, imagined that he saw
Strange alteration wrought on every side
Among the woods and fields, and that the rocks,
And everlasting hills themselves were changed.
By this the Priest, who down the field had come,
Unseen by Leonard, at the church-yard gate
Stopped short, — and thence, at leisure, limb by limb
Perused him with a gay complacency.

Ay, thought the Vicar, smiling to himself,
'Tis one of those who needs must leave the path
Of the world's business to go wild alone:
His arms have a perpetual holiday;
The happy man will creep about the fields,
Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
Tears down his cheek, or solitary smiles
Into his face, until the setting sun
Write fool upon his forehead. — Planted thus
Beneath a shed that over-arched the gate
Of this rude church-yard, till the stars appeared
The good Man might have communed with himself,
But that the Stranger, who had left the grave,
Approached; he recognised the Priest at once,
And, after greetings interchanged, and given
By Leonard to the Vicar as to one
Unknown to him, this dialogue ensued.

Leonard. You live, Sir, in these dales, a quiet life:
Your years make up one peaceful family;
And who would grieve and fret, if, welcome come
And welcome gone, they are so like each other,
They cannot be remembered? Scarce a funeral
Comes to this church-yard once in eighteen months;
And yet, some changes must take place among you:
And you, who dwell here, even among these rocks,
Can trace the finger of mortality,
And see, that with our threescore years and ten
We are not all that perish. — I remember,
(For many years ago I passed this road)
There was a foot-way all along the fields
By the brook-side — 'tis gone — and that dark cleft!
To me it does not seem to wear the face
Which then it had!

Priest. Nay, Sir, for aught I know,
That chasm is much the same —

Leonard. But, surely, yonder —

Priest. Ay, there, indeed, your memory is a friend
That does not play you false. — On that tall pike°
(It is the loneliest place of all these hills)

There were two springs which bubbled side by side,
As if they had been made that they might be
Companions for each other: the huge crag
Was rent with lightning — one hath disappeared;
The other, left behind, is flowing still.
For accidents and changes such as these,
We want not store of them; — a waterspout
Will bring down half a mountain; what a feast
For folks that wander up and down like you,
To see an acre's breadth of that wide cliff
One roaring cataract! a sharp May-storm
Will come with loads of January snow,
And in one night send twenty score of sheep
To feed the ravens; or a shepherd dies
By some untoward death among the rocks:
The ice breaks up and sweeps away a bridge;
A wood is felled: — and then for our own homes!
A child is born or christened, a field ploughed,
A daughter sent to service, a web spun,
The old house-clock is decked with a new face;
And hence, so far from wanting facts or dates
To chronicle the time, we all have here
A pair of diaries, — one serving, Sir,
For the whole dale, and one for each fireside —
Yours was a stranger's judgment: for historians,
Commend me to these valleys!

Leonard. Yet your Church-yard
Seems, if such freedom may be used with you,
To say that you are heedless of the past:
An orphan could not find his mother's grave:
Here's neither head nor foot stone, plate of brass,
Cross-bones nor skull, — type of our earthly state
Nor emblem of our hopes: the dead man's home
Is but a fellow to that pasture-field.

Priest. Why, there, Sir, is a thought that's new to me!
The stone-cutters, 'tis true, might beg their bread
If every English church-yard were like ours;
Yet your conclusion wanders from the truth:
We have no need of names and epitaphs;

We talk about the dead by our firesides.
And then, for our immortal part! *we* want
No symbols, Sir, to tell us that plain tale:
The thought of death sits easy on the man
Who has been born and dies among the mountains.
Leonard. Your Dalesmen, then, do in each other's thoughts
Possess a kind of second life: no doubt
You, Sir, could help me to the history
Of half these graves?
Priest. For eight-score winters past,
With what I've witnessed, and with what I've heard,
Perhaps I might; and, on a winter-evening,
If you were seated at my chimney's nook,
By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
We two could travel, Sir, through a strange round;
Yet all in the broad highway of the world.
Now there's a grave — your foot is half upon it, —
It looks just like the rest; and yet that man
Died broken-hearted.
Leonard. 'Tis a common case.
We'll take another: who is he that lies
Beneath yon ridge, the last of those three graves?
It touches on that piece of native rock
Left in the church-yard wall.
Priest. That's Walter Ewbank.
He had as white a head and fresh a cheek
As ever were produced by youth and age
Engendering in the blood of hale fourscore.
Through five long generations had the heart
Of Walter's forefathers o'erflowed the bounds
Of their inheritance, that single cottage —
You see it yonder! and those few green fields.
They toiled and wrought, and still, from sire to son,
Each struggled, and each yielded as before
A little — yet a little, — and old Walter,
They left to him the family heart, and land
With other burthens than the crop it bore.
Year after year the old man still kept up

A cheerful mind, — and buffeted with bond,
Interest, and mortgages; at last he sank,
And went into his grave before his time.
Poor Walter! whether it was care that spurred him
God only knows, but to the very last
He had the lightest foot in Ennerdale:
His pace was never that of an old man:
I almost see him tripping down the path
With his two grandsons after him: — but you,
Unless our Landlord be your host to-night,
Have far to travel, — and on these rough paths
Even in the longest day of midsummer —
Leonard. But those two Orphans!
Priest. Orphans! — Such they were —
Yet not while Walter lived: for, though their parents
Lay buried side by side as now they lie,
The old man was a father to the boys,
Two fathers in one father: and if tears,
Shed when he talked of them where they were not,
And hauntings from the infirmity of love,
Are aught of what makes up a mother's heart,
This old Man, in the day of his old age,
Was half a mother to them. — If you weep, Sir,
To hear a stranger talking about strangers,
Heaven bless you when you are among your kindred!
Ay — you may turn that way — it is a grave
Which will bear looking at.
Leonard. These boys — I hope
They loved this good old Man? —
Priest. They did — and truly:
But that was what we almost overlooked,
They were such darlings of each other. Yes,
Though from the cradle they had lived with Walter,
The only kinsman near them, and though he
Inclined to both by reason of his age,
With a more fond, familiar tenderness;
They, notwithstanding, had much love to spare,
And it all went into each other's hearts.
Leonard, the elder by just eighteen months,

Was two years taller: 'twas a joy to see,
To hear, to meet them! — From their house to the school
Is distant three short miles, and in the time
Of storm and thaw, when every water-course
And unbridged stream, such as you may have noticed
Crossing our roads at every hundred steps,
Was swoln into a noisy rivulet,
Would Leonard then, when elder boys remained
At home, go staggering through the slippery fords,
Bearing his brother on his back. I have seen him,
On windy days, in one of those stray brooks,
Ay, more than once I have seen him, mid-leg deep,
Their two books lying both on a dry stone,
Upon the hither side: and once I said,
As I remember, looking round these rocks
And hills on which we all of us were born,
That God who made the great book of the world
Would bless such piety —

Leonard. It may be then —

Priest. Never did worthier lads break English bread:
The very brightest Sunday Autumn saw,
With all its mealy clusters of ripe nuts,
Could never keep those boys away from church,
Or tempt them to an hour of sabbath breach.
Leonard and James! I warrant, every corner
Among these rocks, and every hollow place
That venturous foot could reach, to one or both
Was known as well as to the flowers that grow there.
Like roe-bucks they went bounding o'er the hills;
They played like two young ravens on the crags:
Then they could write, ay and speak too, as well
As many of their betters — and for Leonard!
The very night before he went away,
In my own house I put into his hand
A Bible, and I'd wager house and field
That, if he be alive, he has it yet.

Leonard. It seems, these Brothers have not lived to be
A comfort to each other —

Priest. That they might

Live to such end is what both old and young
In this our valley all of us have wished,
And what, for my part, I have often prayed:
But Leonard —
Leonard. Then James still is left among you!
Priest. 'Tis of the elder brother I am speaking:
They had an uncle; — he was at that time
A thriving man, and trafficked on the seas:
And, but for that same uncle, to this hour
Leonard had never handled rope or shroud:
For the boy loved the life which we lead here;
And though of unripe years, a stripling only,
His soul was knit to this his native soil.
But, as I said, old Walter was too weak
To strive with such a torrent; when he died,
The estate and house were sold; and all their sheep,
A pretty flock, and which, for aught I know,
Had clothed the Ewbanks for a thousand years: —
Well — all was gone, and they were destitute,
And Leonard, chiefly for his Brother's sake,
Resolved to try his fortune on the seas.
Twelve years are past since we had tidings from him.
If there were one among us who had heard
That Leonard Ewbank was come home again,
From the Great Gavel,[1] down by Leeza's banks,
And down the Enna, far as Egremont,
The day would be a joyous festival;
And those two bells of ours, which there you see —
Hanging in the open air — but, O good Sir!
This is sad talk — they'll never sound for him —
Living or dead. — When last we heard of him,
He was in slavery among the Moors

[1] The Great Gavel, so called, I imagine, from its resemblance to the gable end of a house, is one of the highest of the Cumberland Mountains. It stands at the head of the several vales of Ennerdale, Wastdale, and Borrowdale.

The Leeza is a river which flows into the Lake of Ennerdale: on issuing from the Lake, it changes its name, and is called the End, Eyne, or Enna. It falls into the sea a little below Egremont.

Upon the Barbary coast. — 'Twas not a little
That would bring down his spirit; and no doubt,
Before it ended in his death, the Youth
Was sadly crossed. — Poor Leonard! when we parted,
He took me by the hand, and said to me,
If e'er he should grow rich, he would return,
To live in peace upon his father's land,
And lay his bones among us.
Leonard. If that day
Should come, 't would needs be a glad day for him;
He would himself, no doubt, be happy then
As any that should meet him —
Priest. Happy! Sir —
Leonard. You said his kindred all were in their graves,
And that he had one Brother —
Priest. That is but
A fellow-tale of sorrow. From his youth
James, though not sickly, yet was delicate;
And Leonard being always by his side
Had done so many offices about him,
That, though he was not of a timid nature,
Yet still the spirit of a mountain-boy
In him was somewhat checked; and, when his Brother
Was gone to sea, and he was left alone,
The little colour that he had was soon
Stolen from his cheek; he drooped, and pined, and
pined —
Leonard. But these are all the graves of full-grown men!
Priest. Ay, Sir, that passed away: we took him to us;
He was the child of all the dale — he lived
Three months with one, and six months with another,
And wanted neither food, nor clothes, nor love:
And many, many happy days were his.
But, whether blithe or sad, 'tis my belief
His absent Brother still was at his heart.
And, when he dwelt beneath our roof, we found
(A practice till this time unknown to him)
That often, rising from his bed at night,
He in his sleep would walk about, and sleeping

He sought his brother Leonard. — You are moved!
Forgive me, Sir: before I spoke to you,
I judged you most unkindly.
Leonard. But this Youth,
How did he die at last?
Priest. One sweet May-morning,
(It will be twelve years since when Spring returns)
He had gone forth among the new-dropped lambs,
With two or three companions, whom their course
Of occupation led from height to height
Under a cloudless sun — till he, at length,
Through weariness, or, haply, to indulge
The humour of the moment, lagged behind.
You see yon precipice; — it wears the shape
Of a vast building made of many crags;
And in the midst is one particular rock
That rises like a column from the vale,
Whence by our shepherds it is called THE PILLAR.
Upon its aëry summit crowned with heath,
The loiterer, not unnoticed by his comrades,
Lay stretched at ease; but, passing by the place
On their return, they found that he was gone.
No ill was feared; till one of them by chance
Entering, when evening was far spent, the house
Which at that time was James's home, there learned
That nobody had seen him all that day:
The morning came, and still he was unheard of:
The neighbours were alarmed, and to the brook
Some hastened; some ran to the lake: ere noon
They found him at the foot of that same rock
Dead, and with mangled limbs. The third day after
I buried him, poor Youth, and there he lies!
Leonard. And that then *is* his grave! — Before his death
You say that he saw many happy years?
Priest. Ay, that he did —
Leonard. And all went well with him? —
Priest. If he had one, the Youth had twenty homes.
Leonard. And you believe, then, that his mind was easy? —

Priest. Yes, long before he died, he found that time
Is a true friend to sorrow; and unless
His thoughts were turned on Leonard's luckless fortune,
He talked about him with a cheerful love.
Leonard. He could not come to an unhallowed end!
Priest. Nay, God forbid! — You recollect I mentioned
A habit which disquietude and grief
Had brought upon him; and we all conjectured
That, as the day was warm, he had lain down
On the soft heath, — and, waiting for his comrades,
He there had fallen asleep; that in his sleep
He to the margin of the precipice
Had walked, and from the summit had fallen headlong:
And so no doubt he perished. When the Youth
Fell, in his hand he must have grasped, we think,
His shepherd's staff; for on that Pillar of rock
It had been caught mid-way; and there for years
It hung; — and mouldered there.
The Priest here ended —
The Stranger would have thanked him, but he felt
A gushing from his heart, that took away
The power of speech. Both left the spot in silence;
And Leonard, when they reached the church-yard gate,
As the Priest lifted up the latch, turned round, —
And, looking at the grave, he said, "My Brother!"
The Vicar did not hear the words: and now,
He pointed towards his dwelling-place, entreating
That Leonard would partake his homely fare:
The other thanked him with an earnest voice;
But added, that, the evening being calm,
He would pursue his journey. So they parted.
It was not long ere Leonard reached a grove
That overhung the road: he there stopped short,
And, sitting down beneath the trees, reviewed
All that the Priest had said: his early years
Were with him: — his long absence, cherished hopes,
And thoughts which had been his an hour before,
All pressed on him with such a weight, that now,
This vale, where he had been so happy, seemed

A place in which he could not bear to live:
So he relinquished all his purposes.
He travelled back to Egremont:° and thence,
That night, he wrote a letter to the Priest,
Reminding him of what had passed between them;
And adding, with a hope to be forgiven,
That it was from the weakness of his heart
He had not dared to tell him who he was.
This done, he went on shipboard, and is now
A Seaman, a grey-headed Mariner.

MICHAEL°

A PASTORAL POEM

If from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,°
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
But, courage! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
And to that simple object appertains
A story — unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me

Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved; not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude. I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone; and oftentimes,
When others heeded not, He heard the South
Make subterraneous music,° like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
"The winds are now devising work for me!"
And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains: he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him, and left him, on the heights.
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.

And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air; hills, which with vigorous step
He had so often climbed; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
Which, like a book, preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
The certainty of honourable gain;
Those fields, those hills — what could they less? had laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.
His days had not been passed in singleness.
His Helpmate was a comely matron, old —
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
Of antique form; this large, for spinning wool;
That small, for flax; and if one wheel had rest
It was because the other was at work.
The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old, — in shepherd's phrase,
With one foot in the grave. This only Son,
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors
The Son and Father were come home, even then,
Their labour did not cease; unless when all
Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,

Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal
Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)
And his old Father both betook themselves
To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fireside; perhaps to card
Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.
Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,
That in our ancient uncouth country style
With huge and black projection overbrowed
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp;
An aged utensil, which had performed
Service beyond all others of its kind.
Early at evening did it burn — and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
Which, going by from year to year, had found,
And left, the couple neither gay perhaps
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.
And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,
There by the light of this old lamp they sate,
Father and Son, while far into the night
The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
This light was famous in its neighbourhood,
And was a public symbol of the life
That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
High into Easedale,° up to Dunmail-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake;
And from this constant light, so regular
And so far seen, the House itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named THE EVENING STAR.

Thus living on through such a length of years,
The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's heart
This son of his old age was yet more dear—
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all—
Than that a child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.
And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the Young-one in his sight, when he
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
Sate with a fettered sheep before him stretched
Under the large old oak, that near his door
Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,
Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The Clipping Tree,[1] a name which yet it bears.
There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

[1] Clipping is the word used in the North of England for shearing.

And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old;
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipt
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help;
And for this cause not always, I believe,
Receiving from his Father hire of praise;
Though nought was left undone which staff, or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts; and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now? that from the Boy there came
Feelings and emanations — things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old Man's heart seemed born again?

Thus in his father's sight the Boy grew up:
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,

A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.
As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
"I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and, if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him; — but
'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.
When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman — he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade — and Luke to him shall go,
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor,

What can be gained?"
At this the old Man paused,
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
He was a parish-boy — at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbours bought
A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;
And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and monies to the poor,
And, at his birth-place, built a chapel floored
With marble, which he sent from foreign lands.
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
And thus resumed: — "Well, Isabel! this scheme
These two days, has been meat and drink to me.
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
We have enough — I wish indeed that I
Were younger; — but this hope is a good hope.
Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
— If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-night."
Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The Housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work: for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the last two nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
And when they rose at morning she could see

That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go:
We have no other Child but thee to lose,
None to remember — do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will die."
The Youth made answer with a jocund voice;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.
With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the Boy;
To which, requests were added, that forthwith
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbours round;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
"He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
The Housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.
Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheepfold; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked:
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped,
And thus the old Man spake to him: — "My Son,

To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should touch
On things thou canst not know of.— After thou
First cam'st into the world — as oft befalls
To new-born infants — thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed
And on the mountains; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke: among these hills,
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand,
And said, "Nay, do not take it so — I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
— Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father: and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together: here they lived,
As all their Forefathers had done; and when
At length their time was come, they were not loth
To give their bodies to the family mould.

I wished that thou should'st live the life they lived:
But, 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burthened when they came to me;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
— It looks as if it never could endure
Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou should'st go."
At this the old Man paused;
Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
"This was a work for us; and now, my Son,
It is a work for me. But, lay one stone —
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
Nay, Boy, be of good hope; — we both may live
To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale; — do thou thy part;
I will do mine. — I will begin again
With many tasks that were resigned to thee:
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face. — Heaven bless thee, Boy!
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes; it should be so — yes — yes —
I knew that thou could'st never have a wish
To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me
Only by links of love: when thou art gone,
What will be left to us! — But, I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear

And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well —
When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here: a covenant
'Twill be between us; but, whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."
The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped down,
And, as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheepfold. At the sight
The old Man's grief broke from him; to his heart
He pressed his Son, he kissèd him and wept;
And to the house together they returned.
— Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,
Ere the night fell: — with morrow's dawn the Boy
Began his journey, and when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face;
And all the neighbours, as he passed their doors,
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight.
A good report did from their Kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing: and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout
"The prettiest letters that were ever seen."
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on: and once again
The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the Sheepfold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty; and, at length,
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart:
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the old Man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
And listened to the wind; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old Man — and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years, from time to time,
He at the building of this Sheepfold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her Husband: at his death the estate
Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
The Cottage which was named the Evening Star
Is gone — the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighbourhood: — yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door; and the remains
Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll.

SONG AT THE FEAST OF BROUGHAM CASTLE°

UPON THE RESTORATION OF LORD CLIFFORD, THE SHEPHERD, TO THE ESTATES AND HONOURS OF HIS ANCESTORS

High in the breathless Hall° the Minstrel sate,
And Emont's murmur mingled with the Song. —
The words of ancient time I thus translate,
A festal strain that hath been silent long: —
"From town to town, from tower to tower,
The red rose° is a gladsome flower.
Her thirty years of winter past,
The red rose is revived at last;
She lifts her head for endless spring,
For everlasting blossoming:
Both roses flourish, red and white:
In love and sisterly delight
The two that were at strife are blended,
And all old troubles now are ended. —
Joy! joy to both! but most to her
Who is the flower of Lancaster!
Behold her how She smiles to-day
On this great throng, this bright array!
Fair greeting doth she send to all
From every corner of the hall;
But chiefly from above the board
Where sits in state our rightful Lord,
A Clifford to his own restored!
They came with banner, spear, and shield,
And it was proved in Bosworth-field.
Not long the Avenger was withstood —
Earth helped him with the cry of blood:
St. George was for us, and the might
Of blessed Angels crowned the right.
Loud voice the Land has uttered forth,
We loudest in the faithful north:
Our fields rejoice, our mountains ring,

Our streams proclaim a welcoming;
Our strong-abodes and castles see
The glory of their loyalty.
How glad is Skipton° at this hour —
Though lonely, a deserted Tower;
Knight, squire, and yeoman, page and groom:
We have them at the feast of Brough'm.
How glad Pendragon° — though the sleep
Of years be on her! — She shall reap
A taste of this great pleasure, viewing
As in a dream her own renewing.
Rejoiced is Brough,° right glad, I deem,
Beside her little humble stream;
And she that keepeth watch° and ward
Her statelier Eden's course to guard;
They both are happy at this hour,
Though each is but a lonely Tower: —
But here is perfect joy and pride
For one fair House° by Emont's side,
This day, distinguished without peer,
To see her Master and to cheer —
Him, and his Lady-mother dear!
Oh! it was a time forlorn
When the fatherless was born —
Give her wings that she may fly,
Or she sees her infant die!
Swords that are with slaughter wild
Hunt the Mother and the Child.
Who will take them from the light?
— Yonder is a man in sight —
Yonder is a house — but where?
No, they must not enter there.
To the caves, and to the brooks,
To the clouds of heaven she looks;
She is speechless, but her eyes
Pray in ghostly agonies.
Blissful Mary, Mother mild,
Maid and Mother undefiled,
Save a Mother and her Child!

Now Who is he that bounds with joy
On Carrock's side,° a Shepherd-boy?
No thoughts hath he but thoughts that pass
Light as the wind along the grass.
Can this be He who hither came
In secret, like a smothered flame?
O'er whom such thankful tears were shed
For shelter, and a poor man's bread!
God loves the Child; and God hath willed
That those dear words should be fulfilled,
The Lady's words, when forced away,
The last she to her Babe did say:
'My own, my own, thy Fellow-guest
I may not be; but rest thee, rest,
For lowly shepherd's life is best!'
Alas! when evil men are strong
No life is good, no pleasure long.
The Boy must part from Mosedale's° groves,
And leave Blencathara's° rugged coves,
And quit the flowers that summer brings
To Glenderamakin's° lofty springs;
Must vanish, and his careless cheer
Be turned to heaviness and fear,
— Give Sir Lancelot Threlkeld° praise!
Hear it, good man, old in days!
Thou tree of covert and of rest
For this young Bird that is distrest;
Among thy branches safe he lay,
And he was free to sport and play,
When falcons were abroad for prey.
A recreant harp, that sings of fear
And heaviness in Clifford's ear!
I said, when evil men are strong,
No life is good, no pleasure long,
A weak and cowardly untruth!
Our Clifford was a happy Youth,
And thankful through a weary time,
That brought him up to manhood's prime.
— Again he wanders forth at will,

And tends a flock from hill to hill:
His garb is humble; ne'er was seen
Such garb with such a noble mien;
Among the shepherd grooms no mate
Hath he, a Child of strength and state!
Yet lacks not friends for simple glee,
Nor yet for higher sympathy.
To his side the fallow-deer
Came, and rested without fear;
The eagle, lord of land and sea,
Stooped down to pay him fealty;
And both the undying fish° that swim
Through Bowscale-tarn did wait on him;
The pair were servants of his eye
In their immortality;
And glancing, gleaming, dark or bright,
Moved to and fro, for his delight.
He knew the rocks which Angels haunt
Upon the mountains visitant;
He hath kenned them taking wing:
And into caves where Faeries sing
He hath entered; and been told
By Voices how men lived of old.
Among the heavens his eye can see
The face of thing that is to be;
And, if that men report him right,
His tongue could whisper words of might.
— Now another day is come,
Fitter hope, and nobler doom;
He hath thrown aside his crook,
And hath buried deep his book;
Armour rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls; —
'Quell the Scot,' exclaims the Lance —
Bear me to the heart of France,
Is the longing of the Shield —
Tell thy name, thou trembling Field;
Field of death, where'er thou be,
Groan thou with our victory!

Happy day, and mighty hour,
When our Shepherd, in his power,
Mailed and horsed, with lance and sword,
To his ancestors restored,
Like a re-appearing Star,
Like a glory from afar,
First shall head the flock of war!"

Alas! the impassioned minstrel did not know
How, by Heaven's grace, this Clifford's heart was framed:
How he, long forced in humble walks to go,
Was softened into feeling, soothed, and tamed.

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

In him the savage virtue of the Race,
Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts were dead:
Nor did he change; but kept in lofty place
The wisdom which adversity had bred.

Glad were the vales, and every cottage hearth;
The Shepherd-lord was honoured more and more;
And, ages after he was laid in earth,
"The good Lord Clifford" was the name he bore.

IV. SONNETS

1. POLITICAL SONNETS

COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SIDE, NEAR CALAIS, AUGUST, 1802°

FAIR Star of evening, Splendour of the west,
Star of my Country! — on the horizon's brink
Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink
On England's bosom; yet well pleased to rest,
Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I think,
Should'st be my Country's emblem; and should'st wink,
Bright Star! with laughter on her banners, drest
In thy fresh beauty. There! that dusky spot
Beneath thee, that is England; there she lies.
Blessings be on you both! one hope, one lot,
One life, one glory! — I, with many a fear
For my dear Country, many heartfelt sighs,
Among men who do not love her, linger here.

SEPTEMBER, 1802. NEAR DOVER°

INLAND, within a hollow vale, I stood;
And saw, while sea was calm and air was clear,
The coast of France — the coast of France how near!
Drawn almost into frightful neighbourhood.
I shrunk; for verily the barrier flood
Was like a lake, or river bright and fair,
A span of waters; yet what power is there!
What mightiness for evil and for good!

Even so doth God protect us if we be
Virtuous and wise. Winds blow, and waters roll,
Strength to the brave, and Power, and Deity;
Yet in themselves are nothing! One decree
Spake laws to *them*, and said that by the soul
Only, the Nations shall be great and free.

LONDON, 1802°

Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

1801°

I grieved for Buonaparté, with a vain
And an unthinking grief! The tenderest mood
Of that Man's mind — what can it be? what food
Fed his first hopes? what knowledge could *he* gain?
'Tis not in battles that from youth we train
The Governor who must be wise and good,
And temper with the sternness of the brain
Thoughts motherly, and meek as womanhood.
Wisdom doth live with children round her knees:

Books, leisure, perfect freedom, and the talk
Man holds with week-day man in the hourly walk
Of the mind's business: these are the degrees
By which true Sway doth mount; this is the stalk
True Power doth grow on; and her rights are these.

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the whistling Rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den;—
O miserable Chieftain! where and when
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies;
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC

Once did She hold the gorgeous east in fee;
And was the safeguard of the west: the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
She was a maiden City, bright and free;
No guile seduced, no force could violate;
And, when she took unto herself a Mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;

Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final day:
Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
Of that which once was great is passed away.

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND.°

Two Voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty Voice:
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven:
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!

2. MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, SEPT. 3, 1802°

EARTH has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

THE RIVER DUDDON°

I

SOLE listener, Duddon!° to the breeze that played
With thy clear voice, I caught the fitful sound
Wafted o'er sullen moss and craggy mound —
Unfruitful solitudes, that seemed to upbraid
The sun in heaven! — but now, to form a shade
For Thee, green alders have together wound
Their foliage; ashes flung their arms around;
And birch-trees risen in silver colonnade.
And thou hast also tempted here to rise,
'Mid sheltering pines, this Cottage rude and grey;
Whose ruddy children, by the mother's eyes

Carelessly watched, sport through the summer day,
Thy pleased associates: — light as endless May
On infant bosoms lonely Nature lies.

II

THE PLAIN OF DONNERDALE°

The old inventive Poets, had they seen,
Or rather felt, the entrancement that detains
Thy waters, Duddon! 'mid these flowery plains —
The still repose, the liquid lapse serene,
Transferred to bowers imperishably green,
Had beautified Elysium! But these chains
Will soon be broken; — a rough course remains,
Rough as the past; where Thou, of placid mien,
Innocuous as a firstling of the flock,
And countenanced like a soft cerulean sky,
Shalt change thy temper; and, with many a shock
Given and received in mutual jeopardy,
Dance, like a Bacchanal, from rock to rock,
Tossing her frantic thyrsus° wide and high!

III

Return, Content!° for fondly I pursued,
Even when a child, the Streams — unheard, unseen;
Through tangled woods, impending rocks between;
Or, free as air, with flying inquest viewed
The sullen reservoirs whence their bold brood —
Pure as the morning, fretful, boisterous, keen,
Green as the salt-sea billows, white and green —
Poured down the hills, a choral multitude!
Nor have I tracked their course for scanty gains;
They taught me random cares and truant joys,
That shield from mischief and preserve from stains
Vague minds, while men are growing out of boys;
Maturer Fancy owes to their rough noise
Impetuous thoughts that brook not servile reins.

IV

AFTER-THOUGHT°

I thought of Thee, my partner and my guide,
As being past away. — Vain sympathies!
For, backward, Duddon! as I cast my eyes,
I see what was, and is, and will abide;
Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever glide;
The Form remains, the Function never dies;
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
The elements, must vanish; — be it so!
Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know.°

INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE

Tax not the royal Saint with vain expense,
With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned —
Albeit labouring for a scanty band
Of white robed Scholars only — this immense
And glorious Work of fine intelligence!
Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more;
So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering — and wandering on as loth to die;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality.

BETWEEN NAMUR AND LIEGE°

What lovelier home could gentle Fancy choose?
Is this the stream, whose cities, heights, and plains,

War's favourite playground, are with crimson stains
Familiar, as the Morn with pearly dews?
The Morn, that now, along the silver MEUSE,
Spreading her peaceful ensigns, calls the swains
To tend their silent boats and ringing wains,
Or strip the bough whose mellow fruit bestrews
The ripening corn beneath it. As mine eyes
Turn from the fortified and threatening hill,
How sweet the prospect of yon watery glade,
With its grey rocks clustering in pensive shade —
That, shaped like old monastic turrets, rise
From the smooth meadow-ground, serene and still!

THE TROSACHS°

THERE's not a nook within this solemn Pass
But were an apt confessional for One
Taught by his summer spent, his autumn gone,
That Life is but a tale of morning grass
Withered at eve. From scenes of art which chase
That thought away, turn, and with watchful eyes
Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities,
Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear than glass
Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice happy quest,
If from a golden perch of aspen spray
(October's workmanship to rival May)
The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught lay,
Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest!

THE PINE OF MONTE MARIO AT ROME°

I SAW far off the dark top of a Pine
Look like a cloud — a slender stem the tie
That bound it to its native earth — poised high
'Mid evening hues, along the horizon line,
Striving in peace each other to outshine.

But when I learned the Tree was living there,
Saved from the sordid axe by Beaumont's° care,
Oh, what a gush of tenderness was mine!
The rescued Pine-Tree, with its sky so bright
And cloud-like beauty, rich in thoughts of home,
Death-parted friends, and days too swift in flight,
Supplanted the whole majesty of Rome
(Then first apparent from the Pincian Height)°
Crowned with St. Peter's everlasting Dome.

TO THE MEMORY OF RAISLEY CALVERT°

Calvert! it must not be unheard by them
Who may respect my name, that I to thee
Owed many years of early liberty.
This care was thine when sickness did condemn
Thy youth to hopeless wasting, root and stem —
That I, if frugal and severe, might stray
Where'er I liked; and finally array
My temples with the Muse's diadem.
Hence, if in freedom I have loved the truth;
If there be aught of pure, or good, or great,
In my past verse; or shall be, in the lays
Of higher mood, which now I meditate; —
It gladdens me, O worthy, short-lived, Youth!
To think how much of this will be thy praise.

ON THE DEPARTURE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT FROM ABBOTSFORD, FOR NAPLES

A trouble, not of clouds, or weeping rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height:
Spirits of Power, assembled there, complain
For kindred Power departing from their sight;
While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a blithe strain,
Saddens his voice again, and yet again.

Lift up your hearts, ye Mourners! for the might
Of the whole world's good wishes with him goes;
Blessings and prayers, in nobler retinue
Than sceptred king or laurelled conqueror knows,
Follow this wondrous Potentate. Be true,
Ye winds of ocean, and the midland sea,°
Wafting your Charge to soft Parthenope!°

"THERE!" said a Stripling,° pointing with meet pride
Towards a low roof with green trees half concealed,
"Is Mosgiel Farm; and that's the very field
Where Burns ploughed up the Daisy." Far and wide
A plain below stretched seaward, while, descried
Above sea-clouds, the Peaks of Arran° rose;
And, by that simple notice, the repose
Of earth, sky, sea, and air, was vivified.
Beneath "the random *bield*° of clod or stone"
Myriads of daisies have shone forth in flower
Near the lark's nest, and in their natural hour
Have passed away; less happy than the One
That, by the unwilling ploughshare, died to prove
The tender charm of poetry and love.

THE world is too much with us;° late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not. — Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus° rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton° blow his wreathèd horn.

Desire we past illusions to recall?°
To reinstate wild Fancy, would we hide
Truths whose thick veil Science has drawn aside?
No,—let this Age, high as she may, instal
In her esteem the thirst that wrought man's fall,
The universe is infinitely wide;
And conquering Reason, if self-glorified,
Can nowhere move uncrossed by some new wall
Or gulf of mystery, which thou alone,
Imaginative Faith! canst overleap,
In progress toward the fount of Love,—the throne
Of Power whose ministers the records keep
Of periods fixed, and laws established, less
Flesh to exalt than prove its nothingness.

MUTABILITY°

From low to high doth dissolution climb,
And sink from high to low, along a scale
Of awful notes, whose concord shall not fail;
A musical but melancholy chime,
Which they can hear who meddle not with crime,
Nor avarice, nor over-anxious care.
Truth fails not; but her outward forms that bear
The longest date do melt like frosty rime,
That in the morning whitened hill and plain
And is no more; drop like the tower sublime
Of yesterday, which royally did wear
His crown of weeds, but could not even sustain
Some casual shout that broke the silent air,
Or the unimaginable touch of Time.

TO B. R. HAYDON°

High is our calling, Friend!—Creative Art
(Whether the instrument of words she use,
Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues,)
Demands the service of a mind and heart,

Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part,
Heroically fashioned — to infuse
Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse,
While the whole world seems adverse to desert.
And, oh! when Nature sinks, as oft she may,
Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
And in the soul admit of no decay,
Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness —
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard!

Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room;°
And hermits are contented with their cells;
And students with their pensive citadels;
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,
High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,°
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:
In truth the prison, unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,
In sundry moods, 't was pastime to be bound
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

Scorn not the Sonnet;° Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honours; with this key
Shakspeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's° wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso° sound;
With it Camöens° soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante° crowned
His visionary brow: a glow-worm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land

To struggle through dark ways; and when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
Soul-animating strains — alas, too few!

A VOLANT Tribe of Bards on earth are found,
Who, while the flattering Zephyrs round them play,
On "coignes of vantage" hang their nests of clay;
How quickly from that aery hold unbound,
Dust for oblivion! To the solid ground
Of nature trusts the Mind that builds for aye;
Convinced that there, there only, she can lay
Secure foundations. As the year runs round,
Apart she toils within the chosen ring;
While the stars shine, or while day's purple eye
Is gently closing with the flowers of spring;
Where even the motion of an Angel's wing
Would interrupt the intense tranquillity
Of silent hills, and more than silent sky.

A Poet! — He hath put his heart to school,°
Nor dares to move unpropped upon the staff
Which Art hath lodged within his hand — must laugh
By precept only, and shed tears by rule.
Thy Art be Nature; the live current quaff,
And let the groveller sip his stagnant pool,
In fear that else, when Critics grave and cool
Have killed him, Scorn should write his epitaph.
How does the Meadow-flower its bloom unfold?
Because the lovely little flower is free
Down to its root, and, in that freedom, bold;
And so the grandeur of the Forest-tree
Comes not by casting in a formal mould,
But from its *own* divine vitality.

NOTES

THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN (Page 1)

Composed 1797; pub. 1800.

l. 1. **Wood Street.** A street leading into Cheapside, London.

l. 7. **Lothbury.** A street leading past the Bank of England, and not far from Cheapside.

WE ARE SEVEN (Page 2)

Composed 1798; pub. 1800.

"My friends will not deem it too trifling to relate that while walking to and fro I composed the last stanza first, having begun with the last line. When it was all but finished, I came in and recited it to Mr. Coleridge and my sister, and said, 'A prefatory stanza must be added, and I should sit down to our little tea-meal with greater pleasure if my task were finished.' I mentioned in substance what I wished to be expressed, and Coleridge immediately threw off the stanza, thus: —

'A little child, dear brother Jem,' —

I objected to the rhyme, 'dear brother Jem,' as being ludicrous, but we all enjoyed the joke of hitching in our friend, James T——'s name, who was familiarly called Jem." — F. (Fenwick note; these notes were dictated to Miss Fenwick in 1843).

l. 1. In the early editions the line stood: —

"A simple child, dear brother Jim."

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING (Page 4)

Composed and published in 1798.

This poem admirably expresses Wordsworth's early attitude towards nature.

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY (Page 5)

Composed and published in 1798.

l. 13. **Esthwaite lake.** Between Coniston Water and Windermere.

l. 15. **Matthew.** Some of the features of this sketch were derived from William Taylor, who was master of Hawkshead School from 1782 to 1786. See the other "Matthew" poems — *The Tables Turned*, *Matthew*, *The Two April Mornings*, and *The Fountain.*

THE TABLES TURNED (Page 6)

Composed and published in 1798.

A companion poem to the preceding.

l. 9. **Books.** Wordsworth was always somewhat indifferent to books.

ll. 21–24. **One impulse . . . can.** Not, of course, to be taken literally, as has sometimes been done.

"STRANGE FITS OF PASSION HAVE I KNOWN" (Page 7)

This, as well as the other "Lucy" poems, was written in Germany in 1799. It was published in 1800. Whether Lucy represents a real character, or not, is unknown.

"SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS" (Page 8)

Composed 1799; pub. 1800.

l. 2. **Dove.** The Dove, a branch of the Trent, rises near Buxton, in Derbyshire.

"I TRAVELLED AMONG UNKNOWN MEN" (Page 9)

Composed 1799; pub. 1807.

"THREE YEARS SHE GREW IN SUN AND SHOWER" (Page 9)

Composed 1799; pub. 1800.

"A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL" (Page 11)

Composed 1799; pub. 1800.

A POET'S EPITAPH (Page 11)

Composed 1799; pub. 1800.

l. 11. **Doctor.** A clergyman is meant — a doctor of divinity.

ll. 19–20. **One that would . . . grave.** Wordsworth had but scant respect for the mere scientist; he thought we should *feel*, as well as *know*.

MATTHEW (Page 13)

Composed 1799; pub. 1800.

"Like the Wanderer in *The Excursion* this schoolmaster was made up of several both of his class and men of other occupations. I do not ask pardon for what there is of untruth in such verses, considered strictly as matters of fact. It is enough if, being true and consistent in spirit, they move and teach in a manner not unworthy of a Poet's calling." — F. On Wordsworth's fidelity to nature, see Introduction, p. lvi. See note to *Expostulation and Reply*.

THE TWO APRIL MORNINGS (Page 14)

Composed 1799; pub. 1800.

See note to *Expostulation and Reply*.

THE FOUNTAIN (Page 16)

Composed 1799; pub. 1800.
See note to *Expostulation and Reply*.

LUCY GRAY (Page 19)

Composed 1799; pub. 1800.
"It was founded on a circumstance told me by my Sister, of a little girl who, not far from Halifax in Yorkshire, was bewildered in a snowstorm. . . . The way in which the incident was treated and the spiritualising of the character, might furnish hints for contrasting the imaginative influences which I have endeavoured to throw over common life with Crabbe's matter of fact style of treating subjects of the same kind." — F. See Introduction, p. xxxi.

THE SPARROW'S NEST (Page 21)

Composed 1801; pub. 1807.
l. 9. **Emmeline.** The poet's sister Dorothy. Compare *To a Butterfly*.

"MY HEART LEAPS UP WHEN I BEHOLD" (Page 21)

Composed 1802; pub. 1807.

WRITTEN IN MARCH (Page 22)

Composed 1802; pub. 1807.

TO A BUTTERFLY ("Stay near me," etc.; page 22)

Composed 1802; pub. 1807.
l. 12. **Emmeline.** See note to *The Sparrow's Nest*. In her *Journal*, Dorothy Wordsworth writes: "While we were at breakfast . . . he wrote the poem *To a Butterfly*. . . . The thought

first came upon him as we were talking about the pleasure we both always felt at the sight of a butterfly. I told him that I used to chase them a little, but that I was afraid of brushing the dust off their wings, and did not catch them. He told me how he used to kill all the white ones when he went to school because they were Frenchmen."

TO A BUTTERFLY ("I've watched you," etc.; page 23)

Composed 1802; pub. 1807.

THE REDBREAST CHASING THE BUTTERFLY (Page 24)

Composed 1802; pub. 1807.

l. 2. **The pious bird.** Compare:—

> "Confiding in his ruddy breast,
> As if it were a natural shield
> Charged with a blazon on the field,
> Due to that good and pious deed
> Of which we in the Ballad read."
>
> — *The Redbreast*, ll. 5–10.

TO THE SMALL CELANDINE ("Pansies, lilies," etc.; page 25)

Composed 1802; pub. 1807.

The small celandine is the common pilewort.

THE SMALL CELANDINE ("There is a Flower," etc.; page 27)

Composed 1804; pub. 1807.

Note the change in the poet's mood in this poem.

TO THE DAISY ("In youth from rock to rock," etc.; page 28)

Composed 1802; pub. 1807.

Wordsworth notes that this poem bears some resemblance to Montgomery's *A Field Flower*. The quotation from Wither is from *The Shepherd's Hunting*.

l. 17. **Morrice train.** A company of morris dancers : a morris (Sp. *Morisco*, Moorish) was a kind of rustic dance.

l. 25. **Mews.** Enclosures, places of retirement (Old French *mue*, a change or changing, a coop for fowls — Latin *mutare*).

l. 76. **Leveret.** A young hare.

TO THE SAME FLOWER ("With little here to do," etc.; page 30)

Composed 1802; pub. 1807.

TO THE DAISY ("Bright Flower," etc.; page 32)

Composed 1802; pub. 1807.

The other "Daisy" poems are classed by the poet under "Poems of the Fancy," but this one is included under "Poems of Sentiment and Reflection."

l. 23. **Apostolical.** "The word is adopted with reference to its derivation, implying something sent on a mission; and assuredly this little flower, especially when the subject of verse, may be regarded, in its humble degree, as administering both to moral and to spiritual purposes." — F.

TO THE CUCKOO (Page 33)

Composed 1802; pub. 1807.

Compare Logan's *To the Cuckoo;* see Introduction, p. xxxvi.

THE GREEN LINNET (Page 34)

Composed 1803; pub. 1807.

l. 34. **A Brother of the dancing leaves.** So like in color as to be indistinguishable from them.

AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS (Page 35)

Date uncertain; pub. 1842.

Suggested by the poet's tour in Scotland in 1803, and may have

been written shortly afterward. On Wordsworth's debt to Burns, see Introduction, p. xxxvii.

l. 39. **Criffel.** A mountain (1856 ft.) south of Dumfries, where Burns lies buried.

l. 40. **Skiddaw.** A peak (3058 ft.) in the Lake district.

l. 50. **"Poor Inhabitant below."** From Burns's *A Bard's Epitaph.*

l. 53. **Gowans.** Daisies.

STEPPING WESTWARD (Page 38)

Composed 1803–1805; pub. 1807.

Dorothy Wordsworth writes in her *Journal:* "The sun had been set for some time, when . . . we met two neatly dressed women. . . . One of them said to us in a friendly, soft tone of voice, 'What! you are stepping westward?' I cannot describe how affecting this simple expression was in that remote place, with the western sky in front, yet glowing with the departing sun."

THE SOLITARY REAPER (Page 39)

Composed 1803–1805; pub. 1807.

"Suggested to William by a beautiful sentence in Thomas Wilkinson's *Tour of Scotland.*" — Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal.* Wordsworth had access to his friend's MS.; Wilkinson's *Tours to the British Mountains* was not published till 1824.

YARROW UNVISITED (Page 40)

Composed 1803; pub. 1807.

One of the memorials of the poet's tour in Scotland in 1803. The Yarrow, a branch of the Tweed, is celebrated in ballad literature. Compare this with Logan's fine poem, *The Braes of Yarrow.*

l. 5. **Clovenford.** Just above the junction of Gala Water and the Tweed.

l. 6. **Marrow.** Mate, partner; in this case the poet's sister Dorothy.

l. 17. **Galla Water** and the **Leader** are branches of the Tweed. **Haughs** are flat, low-lying lands on the border of a river.

l. 19. **Dryborough.** On the Tweed below Melrose.

l. 20. **Lintwhites.** Linnets.

l. 21. **Tiviot-dale.** The Teviot joins the Tweed near Roxburgh.

l. 33. **Holms.** Islands, or low meadows in a river.

l. 37. **Strath.** A river valley.

l. 43. **St. Mary's Lake.** The source of the Yarrow.

YARROW VISITED (Page 42)

Composed 1814; pub. 1815.

One of the memorials of a tour in Scotland in 1814 with his wife and her sister Sara Hutchinson. The poet Hogg was with him when he visited the Yarrow.

l. 25. **Famous flower.** "Doubtless Wordsworth had Logan's *Braes of Yarrow* in his mind, where the lady laments her lover and names him 'the flower of Yarrow.'" — DOWDEN.

ll. 31–32. **The Water-wraith . . . warning.** Compare Logan's

> "Thrice did the water-wraith ascend,
> And gave a doleful groan thro' Yarrow."

l. 55. **Newark's Towers.** On the Yarrow, near Selkirk. See Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

YARROW REVISITED (Page 45)

Composed 1831; pub. 1835.

This poem is a memorial of a day spent in visiting the Yarrow with Scott. See the sonnet, *On the Departure of Sir Walter Scott from Abbotsford for Naples.* For a criticism of the Yarrow poems, see the chapter on "The Three Yarrows" in Shairp's *Aspects of Poetry.*

l. 50. **Eildon.** A triple-peaked hill near Melrose. The **Cheviot** Hills, on the border between England and Scotland, are celebrated in history and romance.

l. 53. **Sorento.** A watering-place on the Bay of Naples.

l. 103. **"Last Minstrel."** See Introduction to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

"SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT" (Page 48)

Composed 1804; pub. 1807.

Addressed to the poet's wife. "The germ of this poem was four lines composed as a part of the verses on the Highland Girl. Though beginning in this way, it was written from my heart, as is sufficiently obvious." — F.

l. 22. The word "machine" in this line has often been objected to as infelicitous.

"I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD" (Page 49)

Composed 1804; pub. 1807.

Dorothy Wordsworth in her *Journal* describes the daffodils thus: "I never saw daffodils so beautiful. They grew among the mossy stones about and above them; some rested their heads upon these stones, as on a pillow, for weariness; and the rest tossed and reeled and danced, and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind that blew upon them over the lake; they looked so gay, ever glancing, ever changing." See Introduction, p. liv.

THE AFFLICTION OF MARGARET —— (Page 50)

Dated 1804; pub. 1807.

"This was taken from the case of a poor widow who lived in the town of Penrith." — F.

l. 56. **Incommunicable sleep.** "Incapable of being communicated with." — MYERS. "A 'sleep' that can make no communication." — DOWDEN. The idea is that the son's sleep prevents

his communicating with his mother, for the latter says no ghosts force their way to her, and denies

> "That there was ever intercourse
> Between the living and the dead."

TO A SKY-LARK ("Up with me," etc.; page 53)

Composed 1805; pub. 1807.

TO A SKY-LARK ("Ethereal minstrel," etc.; page 54)

Composed 1825; pub. 1827.

In 1845 the following stanza, the second of the poem, was transferred from this poem to *A Morning Exercise:* —

> "To the last point of vision, and beyond,
> Mount, daring warbler! — that love-prompted strain,
> (Twixt thee and thine a never-failing bond),
> Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain:
> Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege! to sing
> All independent of the leafy spring."

LOUISA (Page 54)

Dated by Wordsworth 1803, but probably composed earlier; published 1807. See note to the following poem.

In 1845 the following stanza, the second of the poem, was omitted: —

> "And she hath smiles to earth unknown;
> Smiles, that with motion of their own
> Do spread, and sink, and rise;
> That come and go with endless play,
> And ever, as they pass away,
> Are hidden in her eyes."

TO A YOUNG LADY (Page 55)

"Composed at the same time and on the same view as *I met Louisa in the Shade;* indeed, they were designed to make one piece." — F. Published first in *The Morning Post*, Feb. 11, 1802; and included in the edition of 1807.

As to the young lady meant in this and the preceding poem, there is difference of opinion. Knight and Dowden think it was Dorothy, the poet's sister; E. H. Coleridge (see *The Athenæum*, Sept. 16, 1893) suggests Mary, his wife; and Hutchinson conjectures Joanna, his sister-in-law. From the fact that the poet's sister had actually been reproached for her habit of taking very long walks, the probability is that the lines were addressed to her; and the probability is strengthened by Miss Quillinan's reported statement (see *Athenæum*, Oct. 14, 1893) that they were addressed to Dorothy Wordsworth.

"YES, IT WAS THE MOUNTAIN ECHO" (Page 55)

Composed 1806; pub. 1807.

"O NIGHTINGALE! THOU SURELY ART" (Page 56)

Composed 1806; pub. 1807.

THE PRIMROSE OF THE ROCK (Page 57)

Composed 1831; pub. 1835.

ELEGIAC STANZAS (Page 59)

Composed 1805; pub. 1807.

The Peele Castle referred to in this poem is in Lancashire, just south of Barrow-in-Furness. Sir George H. Beaumont, the painter, was born in 1753 and died in 1827.

ll. 1–2. **Thy neighbour once.** Wordsworth spent part of the summer vacation of 1794 near Peele Castle.

l. 54. **The Kind.** Human beings.

ODE TO DUTY (Page 61)

Composed 1805; pub. 1807.

"This ode is on the model of Gray's *Ode to Adversity*, which is copied from Horace's *Ode to Fortune*." — F.

l. 40. **A repose that ever is the same.** In the edition of 1807 the following stanza occurs after this line : —

> "Yet not the less would I throughout
> Still act according to the voice
> Of my own wish; and feel past doubt
> That my submissiveness was choice:
> Not seeking in the school of pride
> For 'precepts over dignified,'
> Denial and restraint I prize
> No farther than they breed a second Will more wise."

ODE. INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY (Page 63)

Composed 1803–1806 ; pub. 1807.

"This was composed during my residence at Town-end, Grasmere. Two years at least passed between the writing of the four first stanzas and the remaining part.

* * * * * * * * *

"Nothing was more difficult for me in childhood than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being.

* * * * * * * * *

"I used to brood over the stories of Enoch and Elijah, and almost to persuade myself that, whatever might become of others, I should be translated, in something of the same way, to heaven. With a feeling congenial to this, I was often unable to think of external things as having an external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality.

* * * * * * * * *

"To that dream-like vividness and splendour which invest objects of sight in childhood, every one, I believe, if he would look back, could bear testimony, and I need not dwell upon it here: but having in the poem regarded it as a presumptive evidence of a prior

state of existence, I think it right to protest against a conclusion, which has given pain to some good and pious persons, that I meant to inculcate such a belief. It is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith, as more than an element in our instincts of immortality." — F. For a criticism of this poem see Introduction, pp. lxii–lxiii.

l. 28. **The fields of sleep.** "The yet reposeful slumbering countryside." — Hales. The poet, however, seems to be thinking of the quiet places among the hills, where the stillness is like that of sleep, rather than of the countryside, where the people are slumbering in the early morning. Compare,

> "The sleep that is among the lonely hills,"

in the *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle.*

l. 102. **Another part.** See *As You Like It*, II, 7.

l. 110. **Thou best Philosopher.** Compare,

> "Youth maintains,
> In all conditions of society,
> Communion more direct and intimate
> With Nature, — hence, ofttimes, with reason too —
> Than age or manhood, even."
> — *The Prelude*, Book XI, 27–31.

l. 120. After this line in the early editions occur the following lines: —

> "To whom the grave
> Is but a lonely bed without the sense or sight
> Of day or the warm light,
> A place of thought where we in waiting lie."

LAODAMIA (Page 69)

Composed 1814; pub. 1815.

"Written at Rydal Mount. The incident of the trees growing and withering put the subject into my thoughts, and I wrote with the hope of giving it a loftier tone than, so far as I know, has been

given to it by any of the Ancients who have treated of it. It cost me more trouble than almost anything of equal length I have ever written." — F.

l. 48. **Hector.** The eldest son of Priam, and the chief hero of the Trojans in their war with the Greeks.

l. 60. **Thessalian** air. Protĕsĭlāus, the husband of Lāŏdămīa, was a Thessalian prince.

l. 65. **Parcæ.** The Fates.

l. 66. **Stygian hue.** The hue of death: the Styx was the principal river of the lower world.

l. 71. **Erebus.** A region of the lower world.

l. 81. **Alcestis** died to save her husband, Admētus, from a decree of Fate, but was brought back from the lower world by Hercules.

ll. 83–84. **Medea . . . Æson.** According to Ovid, **Æsōn**, the father of Jāsōn, was restored to youth by the magic power of **Medēa**, the daughter of Æētes, king of Colchis.

l. 120. **Fleet at Aulis.** The Greek fleet lay becalmed at Aulis, a port in Bœōtia, until the wrath of Artĕmis (Diana) was appeased by the sacrifice of Iphĭgĕnīa, daughter of Agamemnon, the leader.

ll. 158–163. In the early editions this stanza stood thus: —

> "Ah, judge her gently who so deeply loved!
> Her, who, in reason's spite, yet without crime,
> Was in a trance of passion thus removed;
> Delivered from the galling yoke of time
> And these frail elements — to gather flowers
> Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers."

In 1827 the idea of punishment was introduced, and the stanza appeared as follows: —

> "By no weak pity might the Gods be moved;
> She who thus perished not without the crime
> Of Lovers that in Reason's spite have loved,
> Was doomed to wander in a grosser clime

Apart from happy Ghosts — that gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers."

Minor changes appear in subsequent editions; the present text was adopted in 1845.

Wordsworth has often been censured for introducing the idea of punishment; but in a letter to his nephew, John Wordsworth, written in 1831, he defends it as follows: "As first written, the heroine was dismissed to happiness in Elysium. To what purpose then the mission of Protesilaus? He exhorts her to moderate her passion; the exhortation is fruitless, and no punishment follows. So it stood: at present she is placed among unhappy ghosts for disregard of the exhortation. Virgil also places her there."

DION (Page 74)

Composed 1816; pub. 1820.

Dĭon of Syracuse was a disciple of Plato and a friend of Dĭonȳsĭus the elder, tyrant of Syracuse. After the accession of Dionysius the younger, he was banished, and retired to Athens. Failing to secure a recall, he organized an expedition and expelled Dionysius from Syracuse, and became tyrant in his stead. After a reign of about three years, he was assassinated, B.C. 353, at the instigation of his bosom friend, Callippus. See Introduction, p. lxi.

l. 10. **Academe.** Acadēmia was a gymnasium near Athens adorned with trees, and the place where Plato taught.

l. 43. **Ilissus.** A river of Attica.

l. 71. **Auster.** The south wind.

l. 73. **Bŏrĕas.** The north wind.

l. 75. **Mænălus.** A mountain in Arcadia.

COMPOSED UPON AN EVENING OF EXTRAORDINARY SPLENDOUR AND BEAUTY (Page 78)

Composed 1818; pub. 1820.

l. 49. **Wings at my shoulders seem to play.** "In these lines I

am under obligation to the exquisite picture of 'Jacob's Dream,' by Mr. Alstone."—W. Washington Allston, the painter, was born in South Carolina in 1779, and died at Cambridge, Mass., in 1843.

EXTEMPORE EFFUSION UPON THE DEATH OF JAMES HOGG (Page 81)

"These verses were written extempore, immediately after reading a notice of the Ettrick Shepherd's death in the Newcastle paper, to the editor of which I sent a copy for publication. The persons lamented in these verses were all either of my friends or acquaintances."—F. James Hogg died Nov. 21, 1835. The poem was included in the edition of 1837.

ll. 1–9. **Yarrow.** See *Yarrow Visited*, and *Yarrow Revisited.*

l. 15. **Coleridge** died July 25, 1834.

l. 19. **Lamb** died Dec. 27, 1834.

l. 31. **Crabbe** died Feb. 3, 1832.

l. 39. **Her.** Felicia Hemans died May 16, 1835.

LINES COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY (Page 83)

Composed and published in 1798.

"No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days, with my Sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol."—F.

ll. 95–102. **Sense sublime . . . through all things.** On Wordsworth's alleged pantheism, see Introduction, p. lxx.

l. 106. **Half create.** Young's line runs thus, —

> "And half create the wondrous world they see."
>
> —*Night Thoughts*, VI, 424.

A NIGHT-PIECE (Page 87)

Composed 1798; pub. 1815.

THERE WAS A BOY (Page 88)

Composed 1798; pub. 1800.

An extract from *The Prelude*. The boy was William Raincock, one of Wordsworth's schoolfellows. See *The Prelude*, Book V, 364–397.

l. 2. **Winander.** Windermere.

ll. 28–29. **Churchyard hangs.** In the *Prelude* version: —

> "Fair is the spot, most beautiful the vale
> Where he was born; the grassy churchyard hangs."

NUTTING (Page 89)

Composed 1799; pub. 1800.

"Intended as a part of a poem on my own life (*The Prelude*), but struck out as not being wanted there." — F.

YEW-TREES (Page 91)

Composed 1803; pub. 1815.

See Introduction, p. lvi.

l. 1. **Lorton Vale.** West of Keswick.

l. 5. **Umfraville or Percy.** The Umfraville mentioned here was possibly Gilbert de Umfraville (1390–1421), known as the earl of Kyme; he and his uncle, Robert de Umfraville, were famous for their exploits against the Scots. The Percy referred to was the famous Henry Percy, surnamed Hotspur, son of the first earl of Northumberland; he was killed at the battle of Shrewsbury, 1403. He is celebrated in the ballad *Chevy Chace*.

ll. 7–8. **Azincourt** was fought in 1415; **Crecy**, in 1346; **Poictiers**, in 1356.

l. 14. **Borrowdale.** South of Derwent Water.

l. 33. **Glaramara.** A mountain (2560 feet) near the head of Borrowdale.

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE (Page 92)

Composed 1802; pub. 1807.

"This old man I met a few hundred yards from my cottage; and the account of him is taken from his own mouth. I was in the state of feeling described in the beginning of the poem, while crossing over Barton Fell. . . . The image of the hare I then observed on the ridge of the Fell." — F.

l. 43. **Chatterton** died by his own hand in 1770 at the age of seventeen.

ll. 45–46. **Him who walked . . . following his plough.** The reference is to Burns, who died in 1796 in miserable circumstances.

STANZAS WRITTEN IN MY POCKET-COPY OF THOMSON'S "CASTLE OF INDOLENCE" (Page 97)

Composed 1802; pub. 1815.

"Composed in the orchard, Town-end, Grasmere, Coleridge living with us much at the time; his son Hartley has said, that his father's character and habits are here preserved in a livelier way than in anything that has been written about him." — F. The last four stanzas refer to Coleridge; the first four to Wordsworth himself.

TO H. C. (Page 99)

Composed 1802; pub. 1807.

Addressed to Hartley Coleridge, the elder son of Samuel Taylor Coleridge; he was born Sept. 19, 1796, and died Jan. 6, 1849.

ll. 13–14. **Many fears.** The fears were justified; Hartley Coleridge inherited the weak will, as well as the poetical talent, of his father.

TO A HIGHLAND GIRL (Page 100)

Composed 1803; pub. 1807.

GLEN ALMAIN (Page 102)

Composed probably 1803; pub. 1807.

Glen Almond is in Perthshire.

l. 2. **Ossian**, or Oisin, the Celtic bard, is supposed to have lived about the end of the third century.

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR (Page 103)

Composed 1805–1806; pub. 1807.

Some of the features of this sketch were derived from Nelson, and some from the poet's brother John. See Introduction, p. lx.

THE BROTHERS (Page 106)

Composed and published in 1800.

"The poem arose out of the fact, mentioned to me at Ennerdale, that a shepherd had fallen asleep upon the top of the rock called The Pillar, and perished as here described, his staff being left midway on the rock." — F.

l. 139. **Pike.** Peak, hill.

l. 428. **Egremont.** A town in Cumberland County, south of Whitehaven.

MICHAEL (Page 118)

Composed and published in 1800.

In a letter to Fox, Jan. 14, 1801, Wordsworth writes: "In the two poems, *The Brothers* and *Michael*, I have attempted to draw a picture of the domestic affections, as I know they exist among a class of men who are now almost confined to the north of England. They are small independent proprietors of land, here called statesmen, men of respectable education, who daily labour on their little properties. . . . Their little tract of land serves as a kind of rallying point for their domestic feelings, as a tablet upon which they are written, which makes them objects of memory in a

thousand instances, when they would otherwise be forgotten." See Introduction, p. lix.

l. 2. **Greenhead Ghyll.** Near Dove Cottage, Grasmere; a ghyll, or gill, is a deep, narrow ravine with a stream running through it.

l. 51. **Subterraneous music.** Dowden asks if Wordsworth means "the sound of the wind under overhanging cliffs and in the hollows of the hills?"

l. 134. **Easedale** is near Grasmere. **Dunmail Raise** is a pass on the road between Grasmere and Keswick.

SONG AT THE FEAST OF BROUGHAM CASTLE
(Page 131)

Composed and published in 1807.

The Lord Clifford of this poem was Henry de Clifford, tenth baron of Westmoreland. He was born about 1455, and died in 1523. His father, John de Clifford, was deprived of his estates and honors when Henry was about seven years old, and Henry was brought up as a shepherd on his mother's estate in Yorkshire. On the accession of Henry VII, the estates were restored to the family.

l. 1. **Brougham Castle** is now a ruin; it stands on the Emont, near Penrith.

ll. 6–14. **The red rose** was the emblem of the House of Lancaster; the white rose, of the House of York. The Wars of the Roses, as the struggle between the two Houses is called, lasted from 1455 to 1485, when, at the battle of Bosworth, the Lancastrians finally triumphed. The Houses were then united by the marriage of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York.

l. 36. **Skipton** Castle, in Yorkshire, was the chief residence of the Cliffords.

l. 40. **Pendragon.** A castle on the river Eden, in Westmoreland, belonging to the Cliffords, and said to have been founded by Uther Pendragon, father of King Arthur.

l. 44. **Brough.** A castle on a small branch of the Eden, also belonging to the Cliffords.

ll. 46–47. **She that keepeth watch.** Appleby Castle is meant; another possession of the Cliffords.

l. 51. **One fair House.** Brougham Castle.

l. 73. **Carrock's side.** Carrock Fell is a mountain in Cumberland County.

ll. 89–92. **Mosedale** is north of **Blencathara**, or the Saddleback, in the slopes of which rises the **Glenderamakin**, a branch of the Greta.

l. 95. **Sir Lancelot Threlkeld.** Henry de Clifford's father-in-law.

ll. 122–123. **Undying fish.** "It is imagined by the people of the country that there are two immortal fish, inhabitants of this tarn, which lies in the mountains not far from Threlkeld." — W.

COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SIDE, etc. (Page 136)

Composed 1802; pub. 1807.

SEPTEMBER, 1802. NEAR DOVER (Page 136)

Composed 1802; pub. 1807.

LONDON, 1802 (Page 137)

Composed 1802; pub. 1807.

Compare *The Prelude*, Book III, 283–292.

1801. "I GRIEVED FOR BUONAPARTÉ," etc. (Page 137)

Composed 1802; first published in *The Morning Post*, Sept. 6, 1802; and included in the edition of 1807.

"In the cottage, Town-end, Grasmere, one afternoon in 1801, my sister read to me the Sonnets of Milton. I had long been well acquainted with them, but I was particularly struck on that occa-

sion with the dignified simplicity and majestic harmony that runs through most of them, — in character so totally different from the Italian, and still more so from Shakspeare's fine Sonnets. I took fire, if I may be allowed to say so, and produced three Sonnets the same afternoon, the first I ever wrote except an irregular one at school. Of these three, the only one I distinctly remember is, 'I grieved for Buonaparté.' One was never written down; the third, which was, I believe, preserved, I cannot particularise." — Fenwick note to "Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room."

Wordsworth's date here is evidently wrong. According to Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal*, the date was May 21, 1802.

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE (Page 138)

Composed 1802; published first in *The Morning Post*, Feb. 2, 1803; and included in the edition of 1807.

Dominique François Toussaint, surnamed L'Ouverture, was born a slave in Hayti, in 1743. When the slaves were enfranchised, he became their chief, and rose to be governor of Hayti; but having declared himself independent of France in 1801, he was arrested, taken to France, and kept in a dungeon there till his death in 1803.

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC. (Page 138)

Composed probably 1802; pub. 1807.

In May, 1797, Napoleon took possession of Venice and proclaimed the end of the Republic; by the treaty of Campo Formio in the same year he abandoned Venice to Austria.

l. 7. **Took unto herself a Mate.** It was the custom — instituted as early as the tenth century — for the doge solemnly to espouse the Adriatic in token of the dominion of that sea by Venice.

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND (Page 139)

Composed 1806–1807 ; pub. 1807.

In 1803 Napoleon, by his Act of Mediation, remodelled the Helvetic Republic, which in 1798 had been substituted for the old Swiss Confederation, and made his influence predominant.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE (Page 140)

Composed 1802 ; pub. 1807.

Wordsworth dated this sonnet Sept. 3, 1802, but according to Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal* it must have been written July 31.

THE RIVER DUDDON

The Duddon sonnets — a series of thirty-four — were composed between 1806 and 1820, and were published in 1820. The Duddon flows between Lancashire and Cumberland.

I. "SOLE LISTENER, DUDDON!" etc. (Page 140)

No. V of the series.

II. THE PLAIN OF DONNERDALE (Page 141)

No. XX of the series.

l. 14. **Thyrsus.** A staff wrapped with ivy and vine branches; an emblem of Bacchus.

III. "RETURN, CONTENT!" etc. (Page 141)

No. XXVI of the series.

IV. AFTER-THOUGHT (Page 142)

The concluding sonnet of the series.

l. 14. **Greater than we know.** An allusion to Milton's line, —

"And I feel that I am happier than I know." — *Paradise Lost*, VIII, 282.

INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE (Page 142)

Composed 1820–1822 ; pub. 1822.

No. XLIII of the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*. King's College Chapel was founded by Henry VI, and was begun in 1446.

BETWEEN NAMUR AND LIEGE (Page 142)

Composed 1821 ; pub. 1822.

Namur and Liege are two cities of Belgium situated on the Meuse.

THE TROSACHS (Page 143)

Composed 1831 ; pub. 1835.

THE PINE OF MONTE MARIO AT ROME (Page 143)

Composed probably 1840–1841 ; pub. 1842.

l. 7. **Beaumont.** Sir George H. Beaumont, the painter.

l. 13. **Pincian Height.** A hill in the northern part of Rome commanding a fine view of the city toward St. Peter's.

TO THE MEMORY OF RAISLEY CALVERT (Page 144)

Date uncertain ; pub. 1807.

Raisley Calvert died in 1795, leaving Wordsworth a legacy of £900.

ON THE DEPARTURE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT FROM ABBOTSFORD, FOR NAPLES (Page 144)

Composed 1831 ; published first in Alaric Watts's *Literary Souvenir*, 1833 ; and included in the volume of 1835.

See note to *Yarrow Revisited*.

l. 13. **The midland sea.** The Mediterranean.

l. 14. **Parthenope.** An ancient name of Naples.

"'THERE!' SAID A STRIPLING," etc. (Page 145)

Composed probably 1833; pub. 1835.

Compare *At the Grave of Burns.*

l. 6. **Arran.** A mountainous island in the Firth of Clyde, off the coast of Ayrshire.

l. 9. **Bield.** Shelter. See Burns's *To a Mountain Daisy.*

"THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US" (Page 145)

Date uncertain; pub. 1807.

Compare *The Excursion*, Book IV, 613–630.

l. 13. **Proteus.** A sea-god who had the power of changing his shape.

Triton. A sea-god; the son of Poseidon (Neptune).

"DESIRE WE PAST ILLUSIONS TO RECALL?" (Page 146)

Composed probably 1833; pub. 1835.

MUTABILITY (Page 146)

Composed probably 1821; pub. 1822.

No. XXXIV of the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets.*

TO B. R. HAYDON (Page 146)

Composed 1815; published first in *The Champion*, Feb. 4, 1816; and included in the volume of 1816.

Benjamin Robert Haydon, the artist, was born in 1786, and died by his own hand in 1846. He painted a fine portrait of Wordsworth.

"NUNS FRET NOT AT THEIR CONVENT'S NARROW ROOM" (Page 147)

Date uncertain; pub. 1807.

Furness-fells. "In Wordsworth's time . . . all the hills east

of the Duddon, south of the Brathay, and west of Windermere." — KNIGHT.

"SCORN NOT THE SONNET," etc. (Page 147)

Date uncertain; pub. 1827.

l. 4. **Petrarch.** One of the chief poets of Italy; born 1304, died 1374.

l. 5. **Tasso.** An Italian poet; born 1544, died 1595.

l. 6. **Camoens.** A Portuguese poet; he spent some seventeen years in exile in India, and died in Lisbon in 1580.

l. 8. **Dante.** The greatest of the Italian poets; born 1265, died 1321.

"A VOLANT TRIBE OF BARDS," etc. (Page 148)

Date uncertain; published first in Joanna Baillie's *Poetic Miscellanies*, 1823; and included in the edition of 1827.

l. 1. **Volant.** Flying, nimble.

l. 3. **"Coignes of vantage."** See *Macbeth*, I, 6, 7.

"A POET! HE HATH PUT HIS HEART TO SCHOOL," etc. (Page 148)

Date uncertain; pub. 1842.

APPENDIX

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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(Only the more important editions of the poet's works are included here.)

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2. Descriptive Sketches in Verse. 1793.
3. Lyrical Ballads, with a few other Poems. 1798.
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6. Poems, in two volumes. 1807.
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9. The White Doe of Rylstone. 1815.
10. Peter Bell. 1819.
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